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THE NORTH-WEST MOUNTED POLICE AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE SPORTING AND SOCIAL LIFE OF THE NORTH-WEST TERRITORIES 1870 - 1904

by

© PENELOPE DAWN ROUTLEDGE

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

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Date 21 April 1978

ABSTRACT

The march west in 1874 of the newly-formed North-West Mounted Police Force (NWMP) was the beginning of a new life in Canada's Western frontier, an era of law and order. The purpose of this thesis is to show how the members of this Force, during their leisure time, influenced early social and sporting life on the prairies. First came the formation of the NWMP, then the march west, and the ultimate settlement of the men at the various posts. Shortly afterwards, through dances, dinners, drama presentations and band concerts, these newcomers interacted with local Indians and settlers, greatly affecting the social life of the community. Sporting events of different kinds were also organized by the NWMP, including individual and team sports; and more often than not these policemen were the first to create the various sport(s) clubs and competition in the locality. The conclusion is that the NWMP had a significant and unique influence upon social life and the development of sport in the North-West Territories.

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The North West Mounted Police had a prominent role in the social life of the time. They organized dances, race-meetings, parties, sports days, lacrosse games, skating parties, and other events for the settlers in their districts. In 1887 the commissioner of the force stated in a report to Ottawa: "I consider too much amusement during relaxation cannot be provided for the men in this country, where there is so little of any kind obtainable in the winter especially. Amusement will be had, and if not provided will be sought, and many evil effects will result."[11]

Howell and Howell, Sports and Games in Canadian Life: 1700 to the Present. Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1969.

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Illustration I

F. Troop, N.W.M.P. at Fort Calgary.
1886

The most pleasant memories remain of the various occasions on which the police officers, non-commissioned officers and men have entertained their numerous friends at the barracks, and consequently when anything is projected by them it is always looked forward to with eager pleasure.

Fort Macleod Gazette,
Tuesday, July 12, 1886.

Poor Copy

CHAPTER I

FORMATION AND MARCH WEST

On July 15, 1870, the North-West was officially handed over to the Dominion of Canada by the Hudson's Bay Company and the British Government. This Imperial Proclamation added Rupert's Land and the North-West Territories to Canada. With this new ownership came the responsibility to protect the many Indians in the North-West.

Sir John A. Macdonald, Prime Minister of Canada, and the Minister of Justice (whose department was responsible for law and order in the North-West) had conceived the idea of a force of Mounted Police when Canada first purchased the North-West. Once the purchase was final Macdonald gave further thought to this idea.

While the Hudson's Bay Company had been in control, law and order was maintained by Justices of the Peace at the different Posts, and at a civil court in Fort Garry. However, this did not prove totally efficient for the south-western sector of the huge territory. Now that this area belonged to the Dominion of Canada, it also became its responsibility.

Sir John A. Macdonald was well aware of the need for law and order in that part of the country. He did not want to repeat the mistakes of the American neighbors to the south. With the rush of settlers to the American west, a series of Indian Wars with the Sioux, Cheyenne, and other plains tribes had followed. This not only cost the United States millions of dollars, but there was a great loss of life to both

military personnel and the settlers. Macdonald's plan was to have law and order in the West before the settlers arrived. He felt it would make for a more peaceful settlement especially as the Indians would be forewarned as to what was expected of them as citizens of Canada.

At this time the area in the North-West was sparsley populated and a rush of settlers to the area was not indicated, so the government relaxed its plans. Macdonald felt the cost of surveying the western boundary between the United States and Canada was enough of an expense. The proposed transcontinental railway to link British Columbia to the rest of the Dominion, although it was not a present concern, would also be a great outlay of capital. With these two plans in the making, a Mounted Police Force in the North-West was therefore just not a feasible plan at this time.

The United States, in the 1871 Treaty of Washington, had recognized Canada's existence, and the fear of possible annexation by the Americans had passed with this treaty.

Unfortunately the Canadian Government did not realize that the conditions on the plains had changed drastically with the end of the Civil War in the United States. With the attempted suppression of the whiskey trade in Montana, these traders made their way across the border into the foothill country, what is now Alberta. The main concern of these traders was to trade cheap whiskey for the expensive furs of the Indians. They established Forts, and the names reveal their wild heritage. "Slideout", "Kipp", "Standoff", and the most notorious of all "Whoop-Up."[1] They bartered not only with liquor, but rifles and

ammunition as well. However, whiskey realized the largest profits and to obtain it the Indians would sometimes trade their last possessions. With this debauchery of the Indians, violence increased, murder and robbery went unpunished, and the buffalo, the Indians' prime source of food, clothing, and shelter were being mercilessly slaughtered, and were headed for possible extinction.

In October of 1870, Lieutenant William Butler was commissioned to travel to the North-West and report back on the conditions. His report of 1871 indicated the lawlessness of the west, and the debauchery of the Indians due to whiskey. Lieutenant Butler recommended a military force of approximately 100 to 150 men be sent to the west to help establish law and order. The government, instead of acting immediately, also sent Colonel P. Robertson Ross, the Adjutant General, to look into the conditions in the west. The result was that Ross agreed wholeheartedly with Butler that the situation had deteriorated, and that it was imperative action be taken. His report brought to light the fact that "within one year, 88 Blackfeet were murdered in drunken brawls, a half-breed mutilated an Indian woman by cutting the tendons of her arms."[2]

Colonel Robertson Ross also brought to light the fact that goods were imported into Canada and no customs duties were paid, thus defying the import-export laws of Canada and the USA. Instead of recommending that a force of 100-150 men be sent out, as Butler had done, Colonel Ross advised that 500 men, armed and wearing red coats, be sent to the North-West. The red coats because:

> Many Indians had told him that their tribes had grown to trust their "old brothers" the red-coated soldiers formerly stationed in the Red River District.[3]

The government did not move on the recommended Mounted Police Force because their expenses were already high, and it was felt that the money required for such an outlay as this could not be afforded.

The report of Colonel Robertson Ross was made public in March of 1873. Just prior to this, in the Fall of 1872, under pressure from Alexander Morris, Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, Macdonald obtained the necessary legislative authority to begin drawing up the plans for the force. Finally on April 28, 1873, Macdonald presented to the House of Commons a proposed bill that would establish a police force in the North-West Territories. May 23, 1873, saw the bill given royal assent, and establishment of a police force in the Nort-West Territories was assured. It not only provided for a police force, but the establishment of criminal courts, jails, and magistrates were also included.

On August 30, 1873, Sir John A. Macdonald by order-in-council, had the force officially constituted. A few days after this was completed the government learned of the Cypress Hills Massacre that had taken place in May when a party of wolf hunters from Fort Benton, Montana, had wrongfully accused a party of Assiniboine Indians of stealing horses, and had murdered them. This feat was celebrated in Fort Benton as a great victory, but the rest of the country was outraged. Macdonald still refused to believe the gravity of the matter but the persistence of Lieutenant Governor Morris and an urgent telegram from

him on September 20, finally prompted Macdonald into action.

On September 25, 1873, by order-in-council, nine commissioned officers were appointed and recruiting began in Ontario, Quebec, and the Maritimes. The Act of May 23, 1873, had included the responsibilities of the force:

> Its duties were to (1) preserve peace; (2) prevent crime; (3) apprehend criminals. In addition the members were required to act as court orderlies, jailers, customs officers, and escorts for prisoners and lunatics.[4]

The uniforms, supplies, mounts, rates of pay, equipment for the mounts, etc., were all looked after by Frederick White, the comptroller. However, because Macdonald had procrastinated for so long, only a month remained to "recruit, organize, equip the force with uniforms, arms and supplies and get it to Fort Garry before freeze up."[5]

The nine officers whose job it was to recruit, had no problems finding men. The majority of the men were Canadians from Ontario and Quebec, with a few from the Maritimes. These men, if sub-constables, were engaged for 75¢ per day, and if constables, for $1.00 per day. Not all had military experience but more than half had been in a militia.

Three divisions, "A", "B", and "C" left Collingwood on Lake Huron for the voyage by steamer across the Great Lakes. Upon their arrival on the other side, the rest of the trip to Fort Garry would be completed by foot or wagon over the Dawson Route to Fort Garry. The objective was to reach Fort Garry, train there all winter, and proceed with the march west in the Spring. November 1, 1873, saw the final

troop arrive at Fort Garry and on November 3 they were sworn in by Lieutenant-Colonel W. Osborne Smith. Lieutenant-Colonel George Arthur French had been appointed two weeks before the swearing in date as the Force's first Commissioner, but had not been able to make it from Kingston where he was at that time, "Inspector of Artillery and Warlike Stores for the Canadian Militia."[6]

When French arrived, he began to intensify the training and organization of his force. His dream was "an immense, unbridled realm policed by a thoroughly organized and fully equipped body of troopers."[7] The men under Colonel French began a rigorous training schedule involving riding instruction from Staff Constable Steele, foot, arms drill, and rifle practice, etc.

For a respite from the intense work schedule the men organized dances, a Quadrille Club and rifle matches (including one with the military which they lost by 68 points) and skating parties on the Red River:

> On one occasion Steele and a comrade rode the twenty miles to Winnipeg in twenty degrees below zero weather to attend a grand ball.8

Early in 1874 Colonel French journeyed to Ottawa to find out what the future plans were for the men, and to request another 150 men. He knew that 150 men could never police the thousands of miles of prairie adequately.

The Government in Ottawa had changed in the Fall of 1873. Alexander Mackenzie, the new Prime Minister, wanted to stop the whiskey trade but was not sure that the Mounted Police were the right people

for the job. It was Mackenzie's wish to obtain assistance from American soldiers. Lord Dufferin finally convinced him he would be wiser to act independently of the United States and make it a Canadian effort. Under the influence of Dorion and Hewitt Bernard he agreed to let the North-West Mounted Police carry on. With this approval, Colonel French received instructions early in March of 1874 to continue recruiting for the force.

Three more divisions, "D", "E", and "F", were assembled in Toronto and trained there for the months of April and May. On June 6 the three divisions left Toronto by rail for their destination of Fargo, North Dakota. This was done to avoid the difficult Dawson Route. There was one stipulation that all uniforms, ammunition, and arms, etc., be packed away in trunks and boxes, and men were to wear civilian clothes.

En route to Fargo the troop trains picked up needed equipment and supplies. Colonel French also did some recruiting in Chicago and St. Paul in case of any dropouts then or at the time of the march.

The trains reached Fargo on the morning of June 12, 1874, and by four a.m. of the next day they had unloaded and put together the wagons and other necessities for the trip to Dufferin. The first division left at 5:00 p.m. on the 13th, E division 2 hours later, and F division brought up the rear leaving the next day.

Problems encountered ranged from sickness due to prairie cholera and heat, to bucking horses which were not used to pulling wagons, and mosquitoes. Henri Julien, an artist travelling with the group, described the swarms of mosquitoes in this way:

> The insects were so fierce they could tear a mosquito net to pieces or put out a fire.[9]

Perseverance finally brought them to Dufferin, Manitoba, on June 19th, where the government had obtained buildings for the use of the force until the trek west. Here they joined Divisions "A", "B", and "C" now under the command of Assistant Commissioner Macleod in his newly created position.

Unfortunately during the night a violent thunderstorm struck the Dufferin Camp. The eastern horses, not being used to prairie storms, stampeded, injuring men, knocking down tents, and trampling anything or anybody who happened to get in the way. The animals scattered everywhere and the next day Steele and some of the men left to round up the horses before the Sioux captured them. Some of the horses were found fifty miles away, but eventually all the horses but one were found. "Had they not been, this quite conceivably could have meant the end of the force."[10]

A small detachment of men had been sent to Fort Ellice, the site designated as the Force's headquarters. With the exception of these men, this would be the only time in history the whole force would be gathered together.

Final preparations were made. Metis guides were organized under Pierre Leville, and Colonel French received his final orders on the direction the line of march should take: not remain close to the border, follow the boundary for about 200 miles, march northwest for a short distance, continue westward to the Belly River, well away from the 49th

parallel.[11]

On the evening of July 8, 1874, the great march was ready to begin. The problem of desertions had been solved prior to this, when Colonel French called a full dress parade, explained the conditions and what he expected. After these men departed their morale increased and they were ready for the March West.

> This group made up of "24 officers, 2 surgeons, one veterinary surgeon, and 295 men," the authorized strength of the force was 300, a figure which was approximated until 1882.[12]

The column of men made an impressive sight:

> First came "A" Division riding on dark bay horses. It was followed by "B" on dark browns and "C" on chestnuts drawing the field guns and ammunition. Behind these came "D" on greys, "E" on blacks and finally "F" mounted on light bays.[13]

The men, were resplendent in scarlet tunics, white helmets and grey and beige pants. Spaced through the entourage (which when stretched out was two miles long) were the munitions wagons, carts, field guns, cattle, mortars, mowing machines and field kitchens.

Many men kept diaries of the trek, a day to day account of problems and difficulties, but a few of the dates are notable and important. They had to put up with insufferable heat, plagues of grasshoppers, mosquitoes, water shortages for both men and animals (and often the water was too alkaline to drink and caused sickness amongst the men in the form of prairie cholera), prairie fires, hail storms, poorly cooked food, and shortages of food later on. These problems plagued them all the way to their final destination, with no relief

until they were settled.

July 24 marked the arrival at Roches Perces, 270 miles west of Dufferin. Here French divided the company. Inspector Jarvis was to take "A" division containing not only the weaker members but also the weaker animals to Fort Edmonton. The route they were to take was the North Saskatchewan Trail. On July 29, Colonel French and his party continued on to the Boundary Commission Post, and on August 5 he left and followed the northwest route up the Coteaux.

Inspector Jarvis left the sickest men and animals at Fort Ellice with Sub-Inspector Shurtliff. Here they were to construct a North-West Mounted Police Post. Jarvis then proceeded to Fort Edmonton. Occasionally in the evening there would be entertainment provided by one of the half-breeds on the fiddle: "The others would take turns dancing the Red River Jig on a door they had carted along for the purpose."[14] Sometime during the end of October and the beginning of November, Division "A" under Inspector Jarvis reached Fort Edmonton where, with proper food and care, both men and animals mended.

In the meantime Commissioner French and the other five divisions had left Roche Perces and were en route to the junction of the Bow and Belly Rivers where he believed Fort Whoop-Up would be found. Due to navigation problems with their guide, Pierre Leville, who was not sure where he was, Commissioner French, who was experienced in navigation, had to take over with the aid of a compass and stars to check their direction.

Commissioner French stopped and established Cripple Camp

approximately two miles north-west of Old Wives Creek where he had to leave the invalids, and very sick men and horses. Upon leaving this camp, the rest of the force pushed on, when on September 12 they finally reached the forks of the Bow and Belly Rivers, the supposed site of the notorious Fort Whoop-Up. This site was not Fort Whoop-Up or any rich grazing land and so it was necessary that they head south to the Sweet Grass Hills where water and food for animals could be obtained. When they arrived at their destination on September 18, Commissioner French, along with Macleod and a few other men, headed for Fort Benton, Montana, to obtain supplies and notify the government as to his position.

Commissioner French was instructed to leave a relatively large force of men in the vicinity of the Belly River, but he was to head back and establish headquarters near Fort Pelly. They also learned at Fort Benton that Fort Whoop-Up was located at the junction of the Belly and St. Mary's Rivers. Macleod, under Jerry Potts' guidance (the North-West Mounted Police Scout, whose family was of the Blackfoot Nation) came to the banks of the Old Man River. Here they started construction of the Police Post, and by the direction of Commissioner French named it Fort Macleod.

Meanwhile French and Division "D", and "E" had marched back east, picking up men at Cripple Camp, and finally arriving at Swan River near the end of October. Here they found an incompleted barracks at Livingston with no accommodation for them. Once again they marched, leaving Swan River on October 24 and arriving in Winnipeg

November 7.

Commissioner French's first annual report praised the march:

> It was all more notable since, (its members were) tied down by not stringent rules or articles of war, but only by the silken cord of civil contract. Of such a march, under such adverse circumstances, . . . all true Canadians may well be proud.[15]

Thus the arrival of the North-West Mounted Police not only heralded a new era of Law and Order, but a time of construction and a calendar of new social and sporting activities.

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[2]Nora and William Kelly. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police. A Century of History, 1873-1973. Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1973, p. 15.

[3]Ibid., p. 15.

[4]Horall, op. cit., p. 22.

[5]Kelly, op. cit., p. 17.

[6]Horall, op. cit., p. 26.

[7]Kelly, op. cit., p. 21.

[8]Ibid., p. 22.

[9]Ibid., p. 26.

[10]Ibid., p. 27.

[11]Horall, op. cit., p. 45.

[12]R. C. Macleod. The NWMP and Law Enforcement 1873-1905. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976, p. 21 (from now on known as the NWMP and Law Enforcement 1873-1905)

[13]Horall, op. cit., p. 47.

[14]Kelly, op. cit., p. 34.

[15]Ibid., p. 42.

CHAPTER II

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE POSTS

After the arrival of the North-West Mounted Police, the immediate concern was to crack down on the whiskey traders and begin to maintain law and order. However, due to the time of the year, the first priority was to provide some kind of shelter for the coming winter and obtain enough food supplies to last through the long cold season ahead of them.

Colonel Macleod and Divisions "B", "C", and "F" were the most isolated of all the divisions and were very much on their own. Inspector Jarvis arrived at Fort Edmonton two weeks after Macleod had done so on the Old Man River, and in the meantime Commissioner French had marched back east, picked up men at Cripple Camp, and continued on to Swan River expecting to move in to a newly-constructed barracks. Upon their arrival, they found merely an empty shell. French and his men continued on to Winnipeg where they would have winter quarters. Both Inspector Jarvis and Commissioner French, and their respective Divisions "A", "D", and "E", had warm winter quarters and no shortage of food. Whereas Colonel Macleod with Divisions "B", "C", and "F" had to build their own quarters. The staples needed for the winter months ahead had been arranged for in Fort Benton, and meat was just a matter of shooting it. There was a shortage of hay and Macleod decided to send the sickest horses south for the winter with one of the men in charge. To replace them he purchased Indian ponies that were quite

used to pawing for food during the cold prairie winters.

Construction was started immediately, and with the use of cottonwood trees found along the river bank, the fort gradually took shape. The cracks between the logs had to be filled with a clay mixture put in by hand. With the increasing cold this became difficult to do. Orders were for construction of a hospital, stables for horses, men's quarters, and quarters for the officers, in that order.

During construction of the Fort, Colonel Macleod had set about the duty of running the whiskey traders out. Within two weeks of their arrival, the first traders had been arrested. Macleod had learned from Three Bulls, a minor chief of one of the tribes, that whiskey traders at Pine Coulee, approximately fifty miles away, had traded him two gallons of whiskey for two of his horses. At the time he had been quite happy with the trade, but now that he had sobered up realized he had been cheated. Immediately, Macleod sent a detachment of men out under Inspector L. N. F. Crozier to investigate the matter. They returned with five men under arrest, one of them a Mexican halfbreed named William Bond. They were tried before Macleod and subsequently fined, and had their possessions confiscated, including the whiskey. The following day a trader from Fort Benton paid all the fines with the exception of Bond's and while the rest were free to go, Bond became the first prisoner and consequently had to serve a jail term.

The above incident had a very positive effect upon the Indians. They had been watching these men in red since their arrival. Jerry Potts had explained to them how the arrival of the North-West Mounted Police would benefit them. With these kind remarks and encouragement

the Indian Leaders, by invitations from Colonel Macleod, soon made their way to the partially finished Fort Macleod.

A few days before December 1, 1874, Chief Crowfoot, the leader of the Blackfoot Nation, met with Colonel Macleod. He presented the chief with a gift of tobacco and treated him with the utmost courtesy and dignity. Colonel Macleod explained to Crowfoot that they had not come to take away their lands, but to establish law and order so the white man and the Indian could live at peace with one another. The laws to be enforced were for both, and any who disobeyed would be punished equally, regardless of skin color: "As to their land, the government would send its great men to speak with them later."[16]

The Indians gained confidence in Macleod, even with the constant rumors started in the Indian camps by the whiskey traders that the police would be returning eastward and the Indians would gain nothing by their presence. This still did not sway the chiefs. They felt that Macleod had offered the first real justice, and the whiskey was demoralizing and killing their people, and the buffalo were quickly disappearing from the Prairies. It was summed up this way by one Indian: "Before you came the Indian crept along, now he is not afraid to walk erect."[17] The Indians had nothing but favorable comments for Macleod: "The stalwart officer of the white Queen was truly the red man's friend."[18] They nicknamed him "Stamix Otokan" (Bull's Head).[19]

R. C. Macleod, in his book, The NWMP and Law Enforcement 1873-1905, reveals the three general stages the Government had planned for assimilating the Indians. They were:

(1) sign treaties with the tribe to provide for cession of their lands in return for reserves and specified treaty agreements.

(2) persuade Indians to give up the hunt and settle on the reserves, since treaties did not make this obligatory.

(3) try to integrate the Indian into the white man's economy, make Indians self-supporting by teaching them agriculture.[20]

The first two items were accomplished, but the third has yet to be.

The men had been living in the poorest conditions. Not only were they having to get along with improper shelter as they built the Fort, but the uniforms, the original ones worn on the trek west, were completely worn out along with the boots and breeches, and any clothes left had to be boiled in salt water to rid them of lice. The solution to the problem came in the form of the confiscated buffalo robes from William Bond and the other whiskey traders. These robes were made into mitts, and caps and any other articles of clothing that were badly needed. The men had received no pay nor mail since they had left on the trek west, which also contributed nothing to their morale.

Fort Macleod was almost finished by the middle of December and settlers, traders, and missionaries had begun to move into the area. Even with all the problems it did not prevent any of the divisions, scattered throughout the North-West, from putting on gala Christmas Dinners and inviting people of the surrounding countryside.

Divisions "D" and "E" under Commissioner French, now back at Swan River, had a very successful party. They had been existing on a diet of "fat pork, biscuits, bread, and tea,"[21] but for the Christmas

feast, pemmican filled with berries and bear meat had been bought. Staff from Fort Pelly, the Hudson's Bay Company, and many half-breed settlers and their families attended. Following the dinner they danced and everyone had a good time.

At Fort Macleod, the Indian Chiefs and headmen were invited for a lavish feast of "buffalo roasts, haunches of venison, saddles of antelope, plum puddings, cakes, canned fruit, and steaming vessels of tea and coffee."[22] Following dinner a very impressive display consisting of the firing of the cannons was put on and then the dance started. The motto "The Pioneers of a Glorious Future"[23] hung above the door to the mess room.

Two hundred and fifty miles north of Fort Macleod the men of Division "A" had also put on a dinner and dance. To show their appreciation to the Fort Edmonton people the men had given one month's pay to put on a lavish feast, which consisted of "fresh buffalo tongues, venison, roast chicken, goose, plum puddings, mince pies, and countless gallons of tea."[24] The one difference at Fort Edmonton was that the celebration lasted for two days, with everyone in the locality attending.

As 1874 drew to a close, Divisions "A" through "F" could look back on the year with pride. The March West, though at times very difficult and trying, had been a success. Since their arrival, law and order had been established, the whiskey traders had been dealt with, and friendly relations with the Indians had been established.

Fort Macleod had other things of which to be proud. The men

had finished the Fort, they had built two outlying detachments which "had received three thousand dollars in customs duties."[25] The one sour note was that the men at Fort Macleod had still not received any pay or mail, and eighteen men had deserted.

Still the prairie west was becoming a place where Indians, missionaries, settlers, trappers and traders were beginning to feel safe and secure in travelling across the prairies.

Life at the Forts included a great number of patrols to track down anyone trafficking in liquor and horse thieves, and to investigate all complaints by the Indians and white settlers. Often, they were called upon to help keep the peace between certain tribes in dispute over old rivalries. Although considerably outnumbered, the North-West Mounted Police acted without fear in these matters and thus possible disastrous consequences were averted.

The Canadian Government, after the transfer of the Territories in 1870, began executing treaties with the Indians. The treaty system, a method used since British Colonial days, insured giving up aboriginal rights to a certain piece of land, receiving in return a number of benefits. All that remained for the Government to obtain by 1875 was the land owned by the Blackfoot and Saskatchewan Indians. Eventually, after seven treaties had been made with the Indians, the Canadian Government had clear title to the land.

Early in 1875, Colonel Macleod, after numerous letters to Ottawa explaining the decrease in the morale of the men over a lack of money, mail, and the need for uniforms, finally received word to travel

to Helena, Montana, where he could secure the funds needed. Macleod and Potts started the long trek, enduring a terrible blizzard on their way, but eventually arrived back at Fort Macleod with thirty thousand dollars and some of the deserters who had decided to return and try again.

The North-West Mounted Police was to again show its strength in Indian matters when the American Sioux, under Sitting Bull, arrived in Canada a few years later.[26]

The winter of 1874-75 saw the distribution in the following manner:

> posts established at Fort Macleod in the south and Fort Saskatchewan. Troop D and E were at Dufferin and Swan River respectively.[27]

The following Summer posts were established at Fort Walsh, and Fort Calgary.

At Swan River the men had assisted in the final stages of building the headquarters. Even so, conditions were still very unsatisfactory. They didn't have sufficient space to drill, and the inside of the barracks was so cold they would often awaken in the morning to a carpet of snow which had fallen during the night. Nevertheless they persevered.

On June 7, 1885, construction on Fort Walsh was begun near the spot where some Assiniboine Indians had been massacred by whiskey traders. The site for Fort Saskatchewan twenty miles down the river from Fort Edmonton, was chosen by Inspector Jarvis, against the protests of Richard Hardisty, Chief Factor of the Hudson Bay Company, who

felt it should be located close to the Hudson's Bay Post. However, around these Forts settlers came and villages grew, telegraph lines were put in to link these small places and eventually the railway helped tie them together even more closely. The first newspaper in the Territories, the Saskatchewan Herald, went to press in Battleford in 1878. When the railway was finally completed as far as Winnipeg, the number of settlers in the west increased steadily. Four short years after the lonely trek across the plains the picture in the west was as different as night and day. By 1883 the Government had increased the number of men from three hundred to five hundred, not because of a lawless west but because of the many diverse duties the North-West Mounted Police were called upon to perform.

The Christmas dinners and dances in the winter of 1874 brought everyone from the surrounding areas together and were a preview of many future dinners, dances, balls, and sporting activities that the North-West Mounted Police were destined to initiate and be participants in during future years.

REFERENCES (Chapter II)

[16]Horall, op. cit., p. 55

[17]Ibid., p. 56.

[18]Kelly, op. cit., p. 45.

[19]John Peter Turner, The North-West Mounted Police 1873-1893 (Vol I.) Ottawa: King's Printer and Controller of Stationery, 1950. p. 193.

[20]Macleod, op. cit., p. 27.

[21]Kelly, op. cit., p. 50.

[22]Turner, op. cit., p. 198.

[23]Ibid., p. 198.

[24]Kelly, op. cit., p. 50.

[25]Ibid., p. 47.

[26]Horall, op. cit., p. 70.

[27]Macleod, op. cit., p. 25

CHAPTER III

THE SOCIAL LIFE OF THE NORTH-WEST TERRITORIES

With their arrival in the North-West, the North-West Mounted Police unknowingly started a tradition which was to be carried on through the years. The Christmas dinners and dances they happily arranged at the various posts in 1874 to show appreciation for the kindness extended them, were the beginning of this great social tradition.

The Mounted Police Posts were the centres for the social life of small communities, and even in the larger communities. Often these facilities were the only ones adequate enough to accommodate large groups. In Samuel B. Steele's book Forty Years in Canada, reference is made to the fact there were few halls in the town, so to help out, "a wing of the barracks was thrown open to the St. George's, St. Andrew's and St. Patrick's Societies for their annual ball."[28]

In the beginning such dinners, dances, and other entertainments were quite unruly. As the posts grew and expanded and the areas became more civilized, however, so did the entertainment, which eventually had quite a flair and finesse. It was with their early efforts that the North-West Mounted Police gained a reputation for organizing such entertainment and parties.

Christmas was a very special time for getting together. Young men stationed in the west were away from their homes and loved ones and, in many instances, had not seen home nor family since they departed on the trek west.

Christmas, 1876, saw the arrival of a chinook (a dry wind blowing down the slopes of the Rocky Mountains, that causes the temperature to increase) at Fort Macleod, which made the Christmas Season even more enjoyable. The men and guests from the nearby settlements sat down to, in the words of William Parker, "a bully spread, consisting of turkey, wild geese, antelope, buffalo tongues, plum pudding, California raisins, nuts and milk punch for which a special liquor permit had been obtained."[29] This same William Parker, after singing and proposing toasts throughout the evening, became very hoarse. No doubt after a dinner such as this the thoughts of many of the men were of the trek west when at times they barely had one good meal.

Although the North-West Mounted Police members were supposed to be fine upstanding, law-abiding young men, in some cases human weaknesses prevailed over logic and unlawful incidences did take place. While a dance was in progress at Fort Walsh during the Christmas season of 1882, two orderlies from the Hospital broke into a medicine cabinet and stole a total of nine gallons of whiskey and brandy, which they proceeded to share with other members of the force and guests present at the dance. The ultimate punishment for the men was four months of hard labor, and five of the civilians involved were fined the cost of the nine gallons.

Christmas 1877 featured a variety of characters at the Fort Macleod dinner and dance: "halfbreeds, bull-whackers, horse thieves--all kinds with guns and knives strapped to their hips surrounded the Fort early in the morning as they were told Christmas dinner would be

served."[30] To help fund the "feast" each man on the force contributed five dollars from his wages. The dancing got underway with music supplied by two of the long-haired bull-whackers who were inebriated with "kentucky moonshine". Although during the dinner the Indians had been served outside, while the officers, men, and halfbreeds were served inside, for the dance everyone joined inside and danced until dawn.

Sir Cecil Denny, in his book The Law Marches West, described a Christmas dinner at Bow River. The Christmas dinner and subsequent dance were given by the non-commissioned officers. Again, all the civilians from the village were invited and at the dance in the Taylor Billiard Hall a number of very pretty halfbreed ladies dressed in their best finery were present. In Denny's opinion "these old-time dances held at the posts were far more fun and hearty exercise than the prim and select affairs after the country became settled."[31]

Apart from Christmas celebrations, a dance was given at Fort Carlton to celebrate the arrival of the North-West Mounted Police. John G. Donkin and another member of the force escorted ladies. Their escorts were the only white women present amongst an assortment of male and female Cree Indians and Metis. The Metis provided the music with their fiddles and the dancing consisted of one dance, the Red River Jig. Many moccasined feet mingled with the shining boots and spurs to pound away at the floor that night. Refreshment of sweet meats, cake, coffee and tea were served by the hosts from the kitchen. An amusing incident took place when the cake was passed to halfbreed women and squaws sitting on the floor.

> You vainly imagined the native lady would pass it on to the detachment in her rear. Pas si bete. With one fell sweep the contents were deposited in the maiden's lap, and then she with a gleam of her pearly teeth, handed you the vessel back.[32]

Nevertheless a good time was had by all and the merriment and festivities were over far too soon.

At Prince Albert the force did not seem to put on any dances or entertainment of any kind. There, the invited red coats were welcomed at the dances of the Scottish halfbreeds. The white people of the settlement did not seem to be interested in entertainment so the men of the force did not bother either. In Donkin's words "we were generally celebrated for the hops which we gave all over the territories."[33]

The Annual Christmas dinner at the police posts became one of the most important events of the year. Christmas dinner at Fort Macleod in 1876 was a very grand affair; the elaborate feast was prepared by the men:

> The entire community, police, civilians, and prisoners sat down to a dinner of buffalo roasts, beef, venison, geese, plum pudding and pies--but not liquor.[34]

Following the dinner the guests were entertained by the men with speeches, songs and recitations. One of the prominent speeches given was by a civilian carpenter, William Gladstone. Another speaker, veteran of the American Civil War, John Smith, "brought down the house with his songs."[35]

Not only were the Christmas dinners grand affairs, but the decorations in the mess rooms were just as elaborate. At Fort Walsh

in 1878 the mess room walls were decorated with revolvers, lances, carbines, and "in large letters made up of bits and chains on a dark background were the words "Merry Christmas" enclosed in a network of lances and flags."[36] To add to the splendor was a picture of Superintendent Walsh wreathed in evergreens, curb chains and steel bits.

Such were the Christmas celebrations at the Forts which were considered the greatest events of the year, and to which the entire population of the countryside was invited.

While the Christmas festivities were important, the men of the force put on numerous dances and balls throughout the year. Many references are made to dances, not only impromptu affairs and those organized by the men, but dances attended by them as well elsewhere. Mrs. L. G. Knight refers to the many lovely dances held at the barracks, and in other halls.

On January 5, 1875, a dance was held after dinner in the mess at Fort Macleod. One of the men played the concertina and to his accompaniment the men performed a set of quadrilles, followed by waltzes, gallops, and schottisches. R. B. Nevitt, a member of the force who wrote about the impromptu affair, also found himself the "Belle of the Ball," and was sought after by the rest of the men because he could dance the part of the lady very well:

> As soon as one stopped a second claimed my hand; of course I felt highly flattered. I too was the only one who could dance the Boston. I waltzed around by my lone to the great satisfaction of the onlookers.[37]

The shortage of white women in the North-West was a real problem,

and young unmarried women were very rare indeed.

> Ranchers, cowboys, halfbreeds, Indians and policemen were the gallants, while the ladies were all squaws and halfbreeds but nary a white woman.[38]

Two of the members, anxious for female companionship, advertised in the Montreal Star "to correspond with a limited number of young ladies for mutual improvement."[39]

At one of the barrack dances in Calgary to which everyone was invited, a lady found her maid attending the same function. One senses a note of disapproval in her statement, "My maid also had an invitation to the same place and to the same ball. I have since had to dismiss her as she got so discontented with her position."[40]

The North-West Mounted Police Post at Fort Saskatchewan was a popular gathering place for social functions. Separate quarters for men and women were set up and the dances sometimes lasted as long as three days and nights, with a pair of moccasins occasionally only lasting one night.

One can imagine the awe of the Indians seeing the type of dancing done when the men arrived in the North-West. They particularly enjoyed the waltz, and the schottische, and were eager to learn them. They were also impressed with the lunches of sandwiches and cakes served by the men. This was a type of food they found tasty and had never experienced before. The dances were also new to the men and the subject of many letters home.

In October of 1882 the men of the force at Fort Calgary collected $200.00 to finance the food for a dance. All the halfbreed

girls had been invited, that is the pretty ones, and the considered opinion was "we expect to have such a time that everything in the North-West will be compared with the Policemen's Dance."[41]

The September 14, 1883, edition of the Calgary Herald contained a vivid description of a dance in Calgary. The dance, organized by the non-commissioned officers and men, was held in one of the larger barrack rooms. The room was decorated with chinese lanterns, evergreens and flags, as well as rifles and crossed swords. The orchestra for the evening festivities consisted of Mrs. McNeil, and constables Belair and Glassford. After three hours of dancing, a supper catered by the Montana Restaurant was served at midnight. Following supper, the dancing started again and continued until the early morning hours, when everyone left feeling quite satisfied with the success of the dance.

The Friday, November 24, 1882, edition of the Fort Macleod Gazette described an impromptu dance held on the Tuesday evening of the 21st at the barracks. Quite a number attended, dancing and eating until the early morning hours. Songs were sung by members of the Minstrel Troupe during the serving of refreshments.

The boys of "C" Troop organized a dancing club for the purpose of holding dances each Wednesday evening during the winter months. The notice in the Saturday, January 13, 1883, edition of the Fort Macleod Gazette read in this way:

> Notice. Dancing Club
> A Dancing Club has been formed by the members of "C" Troop for the purpose of carrying on dancing on Wednesday evenings of each week, from 7:30 p.m. to 12 o'clock. All wishing to join can do so by applying to Messrs. Beattie and Shea. Terms in

advance, $2.00 per month or 50¢ per night.
Ladies free. All are invited.

At times the dances and balls overlapped in similarity, but eventually the balls became more formal occasions with guests attending by invitation. One reads of the annual balls: The dances seemed to be more informal and spontaneous affairs and did not entail the extensive planning and preparation required for the balls.

February 20, 1887, marked the first Mounted Police Ball held in Lethbridge. Musical accompaniment was by "H" Troop band, with a break at midnight to serve supper to the two hundred guests. The dance continued after supper until the early hours of the morning.[42]

In the early part of 1886 a ball was held at the Police Post outside of Regina, and the men sent sleighs down to Regina to bring the guests to the barracks. The room had been decorated with lances, trophies, and arms, and the officers' wives danced with the men in the ranks. 1897 was ushered in by a ball given by "B" troop in Regina, and heralded as "the event of the season."[43] In Fort Macleod the celebrations on New Year's Eve became known as the Annual NWMP Ball.

Battleford, Saskatchewan, provides an excellent example of the transition to more civilized entertainment as the North-West became more civilized. The Annual Battleford Bachelors' Ball in 1884 became known as "The Annual NWMP Battleford Ball held in Couston's Hall."[44] By 1902 the balls put on by the police were held in the new barracks, and great care was taken to arrange them at a time not conflicting with other functions. Not only did active members hold balls, but ex-North-West Mounted Police members also held them, and these, too, were

in the barracks.

Bessie Pattison Taylor, the daughter of former North-West Mounted Police member, remembered the Staff Sergeants' Balls at Fort Macleod and Lethbridge as the most gala affairs of the year. A large block of ice at one end of the room held the punch, and after the ball was over there would be a picnic.[45]

In Calgary, the men were busy decorating from January 9 to January 13, 1899, for the ball on the 16th. Work involved in decorating may have been a waste because for two days after the ball the men were busy cleaning away the wreckage.

William Metzler wrote in his diary about a ball his troop had given on June 7, 1882, with eight white women in attendance. The fact that there had been eight white women in attendance in Metzler's words had made it quite civilized. On December 30, 1882, he left to spend the New Year's at Fort Macleod and to attend the ball given by the police. Over four hundred people were invited and they sat down to supper later in the evening. The twenty white women present at the dance were the first he had seen at any dance in Fort Macleod. The ball was a decided success.

A pioneer of the Maple Creek area recalled how the barracks ball was the outstanding social event of the time. Invitations were sent out and everyone dressed in their finery to attend this delightful occasion, and "later when accommodation was available a citizen's ball was organized to return this hospitality."[46]

An Annual Police Ball was held at Fort Saskatchewan in January.

It seems two were held, as the first one was at the barracks and the second at the Palace Hotel in Lamoreaux, a nearby settlement, where once again, everyone danced until dawn. The members of the force stationed at Fort Saskatchewan made their impression on this prairie settlement, but eventually the people who wanted the men moved to Edmonton had their way and "the sound of the bugle was heard in the Fort on the Saskatchewan no more."[47]

On Friday, January 11, 1884, the Ball to top all balls was organized and put on by the men of the North-West Mounted Police. One of the large rooms had been decorated with the regular decoration of swords, flags, rifles, revolvers and bunting. The dance began at 10:00 and at midnight approximately sixty couples sat down to "one of the most sumptuous repasts ever spread in Calgary, prepared by members of the force."[48] The dancing started after the meal and went on until the early hours of the morning. The event was heralded in this manner:

> This has been the greatest social event of the season, and reflects great credit on the managing committee and the whole force for the high and respectable character of the entertainment.[49]

The Fort Macleod Gazette, which came into print on Saturday, July 1, 1882, was a tremendous "booster" for the North-West Mounted Police. The papers contained many accounts of their activities, and descriptions of the balls were included. The Saturday, July 15, 1882, edition reported on a ball held at the barracks on June 30, which ladies from Pincher Creek attended, and constables Smith and Murphy prepared the supper. The evening was deemed a great success.

On Tuesday, October 24, 1882, the paper reported on a band in

Calgary that was to play at the ball to be given by the North-West Mounted Police when their new quarters were opened. This ball was held on Saturday, November 4, 1882, and although the person writing the column for the paper was invited, along with others, they could not attend because the pullman cars were not yet on the train. Nevertheless, the ball was a success, with numerous ladies in attendance. The barracks, according to the paper, was decorated "handsomely"; the most notable decoration being a motto made out of polished winchester cartridges and, not to go unnoticed, a seven-pound gun with the Union Jack on one side and the Stars and Stripes on the other.

The paper advertised the balls before they took place. One such notice appeared in the Thursday, December 14, 1882 issue. It was a thank you for the kind invitation extended to the staff of the newspaper by the North-West Mounted Police to their annual ball on New Year's Eve. The notice ended with, "We hope to be with them for the ball on New Year's night, quite a number of the fair sex are expected to be present." Still another write-up on the forthcoming ball appeared in the Saturday, December 23, 1882, issue of the paper. It was titled simply, "Christmas at Fort Macleod:"

> And take our police boys who are always doing their utmost to entertain and amuse the public. Besides the treat they give each other every evening, they are giving a grand ball on New Year's.

There was mention of the Christmas dinner to be put on by the non-commissioned men and constables. The article ended in this manner:

> And as the policeman's lot is not a happy one, still they endeavor to make the best of it and never let pleasure interfere with duty.

Finally the Saturday, January 13, 1883, issue of the paper reported on the ball. It was considered to be "one of the most enjoyable features of this season's festivities." The very exquisite decorations were done by Corporal Lander and consisted of a number of mottoes on the walls of the rooms welcoming "Major Crozier, our guests, and absent friends." The music, supplied by the police organ and two violins, kept up until the early morning hours, and the 300-400 people present "expressed themselves as having spent a delightful evening."

The New Year's Ball to usher in 1885 was well-reported. The very high esteem in which the force was held by the people of Fort Macleod is evident in the write up. It was hailed in the Friday, January 2, 1885, edition of the paper as "the event of the season--brilliant decorations and handsome dresses," and described as follows:

> The Annual New Year's Ball given by the non-commissioned Officers and Constables of C Division of the North-West Mounted Police has become a regularly recognized institution and is looked forward to by all as the chief event of the season, from an amusement standpoint.

The ball was held at the new barracks where, once again, the walls were decorated with the weapons and equipment used in the everyday life of the policeman. The paper praised the men in this manner:

> The Mounted Police have proved themselves good men and true in their invaluable service to the North-West and as they have done their duty nobly and well in the more active field of police duty, so are they unsurpassed as courteous and hospitable hosts surrounded by their own household goods, and doing the honors amid the festive scenes of their own ballroom, in the times of white-robed peace.

The only fault the people seemed to find was that the men were too

generous, and they wished they could spend a greater time participating in the amusement supplied for their civilian friends. "G" troop had the reputation of being one of the most hospitable in the North-West Mounted Police. This reputation became more deserved as the successive New Year's festivities took place. The author of the article continued to describe the ball after many asides about the men and how great they were. The ball was considered to be the best ever given by the NWMP at Fort Macleod, and the opinion was that its success was due to the perfect way in which the arrangements were carried out:

> The Music:
> The music was excellent, about the best dancing music we have heard in the country. This was in great measure due to the violin playing of Constable O'Brien and to the piano accompaniment.

This was the first time a piano had been used at a ball at Fort Macleod:

> The Decorations:
> The main feature of the evening was the decorations which were simply beautiful and entitle Serg. W. O'Connor who planned them all, and personally superintended putting them up, to be ranked among the artists.

Again the decorations consisted of swords, carbines, cartridges, and burnishers. Many mottoes had been fashioned with the cartridges, and at the end of the room was a photograph of Colonel Irvine:

> The Supper:
> Supper was announced at twelve o'clock. The police suppers are always excellent ones, and this was no exception, unless it be that it was more excellent.

Thus New Year's Eve was ushered in.

The New Year's Ball the following year was almost non-existent up to a week before. It was feared the ball would not take place, and it would have been the first time a ball was not held at Fort Macleod since the arrival of the police. In the end it did take place and in the words of the paper: "But our police friends would not allow such a catastrophe to take place."

Many more balls and dances could be described, but the foregoing is sufficient to illustrate the great part played by the North-West Mounted Police in bringing members of the community and surrounding areas together under one roof for an evening of merriment. They started with the Indians and halfbreeds, and as more settlers moved into the area they too were invited. The balls became annual events in a lot of cases, and very elaborate with special invitations sent out. The following invitation was found in the personal possessions of Mrs. Jessie De Gear and illustrated the amount of work put into these occasions:

Invitation 1885
NWMPolice Ball
The Corporals and men of D and K
Divisions request the pleasure of
Maj Laurie Company at a Ball to be
given at Clouston's Hall on the evening
of Wednesday December 30, 1885.
Dancing to commence at 8:30 O'clock
RSVP - G.P. Jones Hon-Sec
Master of Ceremonies (white and blue rosettes)
Cons. Carrol
Recreation Committee (white rosette)
Corp. Robinson, Allan, Roby, Davidson, cons. McRae
Cassualt, Browne, Worthington, De Gear.
Committee (blue rosettes)
Corp. Monjean, Cons. Dorion, Whipps, Meredith, Goff,
Door Managers (yellow rosette)
Corp. Des Barres
Cons. McGinnis, Whipps, Dawson, Walters.

White and Red Rosette
President - Cons. J. Kerr.
VP - Corp. C. Ross.
Treas. - Cons. W. P. McDonnel.
Hon Sec. - Cons. J. P. Jones

Balls and dances were not their only forte; as many theatrical and dramatic performances organized by the men, and later by some of their wives, were also presented.

The first entertainment credited to any area in the North-West was presented in October of 1876 after a cricket game by the North-West Mounted Police. The program arranged by staff-constable Dunne also started with his presentation of "Feats of Legerdemain," a series of tricks. Sub-constable Needham followed his act with his composition of the "Fort Macleod Gallup" played on some musical instrument. After a presentation of several songs the evening drew to a close and was considered a great success.

Captain Burton Deane, a member of the force, organized a theatrical group, whose receipts for the amateur performances always went to some local charity. When the Lethbridge Coal Company had a building constructed, the lower part was a theatre with a stage and all the necessary incidentals for a production. It was Captain Deane who, having prepared a play for this particular reason, opened the building.

Another dramatic production presented on February 27, 1884, by the men, ended on a sour note when Sgt. Turner had a fit just as the last set was ready to start. This of course put a stop to the evening's proceedings.

Fort Saskatchewan on February 11, 1882, was the scene of a

Minstrel entertainment at the barracks, attended by approximately three hundred people, was reputed to be the largest number to attend an affair of this nature in the district. The evening started with refreshments at 6 O'clock followed by the minstrel show, and a dance upon its completion.

"F" Troop stationed at Fort Walsh gave many theatrical performances and negro minstrel shows. Staff Sgt. T. H. Dunne, the man responsible for organizing the first such entertainment in the North-West, was usually the man in charge. One of his stars who usually took part was "Nigger Mollie, laundress for the Fort and claimant to being the first "white lady" in the Cypress Hills."[50]

In the evening, after the daily work and drills had been completed and the wet canteen closed, the men often amused themselves with singing and following piper Donald McAulay around the parade ground to the tunes of "Cock of the North or the Barren Rocks of Aden until the sounding of the last post sent them all to roost."[51]

As previously mentioned the wives of some of the men participated in some of the drama group productions. If not directly involved in acting in the play their names were often listed as accompanists to these groups. Quadrille Clubs put on dances and a calico dance put on by the ladies was well attended by the settlers, not only of the immediate area but from as far distant as Medicine Hat.

Sally Bell-Irving and Birdie Herchmer are two of the prominent wives who helped with the formation of dramatic societies and presentations of plays and operas. Some of the notable operas were "Gilbert

and Sullivan's Pinafore, The Mikado, Pirates of Penzance, also Merchant of Venice and the Geisha."[52] Another dramatic group organized was the "Mounted Police Star Minstrel and Variety Troup,"[53] by the members of "C" division at Battleford in 1878. Their second performance of songs, instrumental music, comedy and two farces; "The photographer, and the Egyptian Mummy kept the well filled hall in roars of laughter."[54]

On Thursday, October 19, 1882, entertainment was to be put on by the Fort Macleod Minstrels in the new recreation room being erected by the NWMP at the barracks. Plans were made to continue with this through the winter for the amusement of the people if the first performance proved successful. Unfortunately the Fort Macleod Gazette did not follow up on this article.

The men of "C" Troop Dramatic Club presented musical and dramatic entertainment on Wednesday, December 20, 1882 in the recreation room of the fort. According to the paper, "it proved to be the best and most amusing thing of the kind yet held, and those not present to witness it certainly missed a treat." The program was quite varied and opened with a burlesque circus with several funny sketches, among which were the Canonball Act by Sergeant Turner, and the Barrel Act by Constables Beattie and Haliday. This was followed by a double song and dance by Haliday and Kelsey and recitations by Sergeant Howe. The paper called it a complete success, and hoped the public would attend another performance later to show their appreciation for the men's efforts.

The second performance of this type was held on Thursday,

January 8, 1883, in the barrack room, and started with "the laughable farce--Sarah's Young Man." A much expanded program of songs, clog dances, ballads, barrel sketch, recitations and another play followed, all performed by the members of the NWMP. In fact, the program contained five parts and thus was greatly expanded from the previous performance. The paper gave more accounts of dramatic events put on by the men, and the Saturday, June 29, 1883, issue reported how the Police Dramatic Club had taken Inspector Howe to Kamoose's for supper on the previous Tuesday.

Through the men of the force and some of their wives, the social life of the prairie west improved steadily, going from an almost non-existent one, to a very predominant feature of everyday life.

The Bands of the North-West Mounted Police had their beginning at Swan River Barracks in 1876, but the honor of being the first musical group goes to two members of the force who formed a combo on the trek west for the enjoyment of the men in the evenings. Their instruments consisted of a fife and tin dish with an accompanying spoon with which to beat it.

Commissioner French, who felt that the formation of a band would not only boost the morale of the men in the winter months, but would contribute in a very positive way to official ceremonies, requested money from the Government to purchase instruments. The men took matters into their own hands, ordered the instruments from Winnipeg using their own money, and on February 20, 1876, the band at Swan River was organized. Although the instruments had to travel by

dog-sled all the way, they eventually arrived and the men played for the Queen's Birthday on the 24th of May, 1876. Their first bandmaster was Sergeant T. H. Lake. The band was also present later that year at the signing of treaty number six.

Understandably so, bands were formed at other posts with the men buying their instruments, not only for their own enjoyment but for that of the community: "Many a holiday parade, ball or other festivity in the small western towns was enlivened by the melodious sounds of the local Mounted Police Band."[55]

"B" Troop at Fort Walsh were the next to organize a band in June of 1878. This band was destined to last only until 1881 when the members became involved in arguments after becoming inebriated. They proceeded to hit each other with the band instruments, and therefore ruined them.

In August of 1876 the Swan River Band led the men on the move to Fort Macleod when the headquarters was transferred. As they neared Fort Carlton the Indian women ran into their Teepees upon hearing the music, but the braves who remained outside were very impressed with the drum.

"H" Troop, stationed in Lethbridge under the command of Superintendent Neale also formed a band. The May 21, 1886, edition of the Lethbridge newspaper described their efforts:

> The band of "H" Troop gave an open air concert on the square on Tuesday evening last and played some excellent pieces. We congratulate the men on the rapid progress they have made since forming. Weather and duty permitting, they will play on the square every Tuesday evening. The citizens ought to subscribe and have a bandstand erected for their accommodation.[56]

A band organized at Fort Qu'Appelle in 1880 remained intact until 1902, playing in places such as Lethbridge, Fort Macleod and Calgary. This formation was followed by "D" Troop organizing their band in 1882, but dissolving it in the Fall of the same year when Sgt. Bagley was transferred. "E" Division in Calgary organized their band in 1887. Like the others it played at church parades, special occasions, and at the Banff Springs Hotel. The band could also be seen parading through the streets of Calgary every afternoon.[57]

The Depot Division Band, organized at Regina in 1883, was the band that made the greatest contribution to music in the west. The Regina Barracks became the nucleus of the west in the late 1890's and was a very "in" place socially.[58]

Sgt. F. A. Bagley was a great bandsman and he is not only credited with keeping the Battleford band together until he left, but also organized the first Scottish Pipe Band in the west when he was transferred to Calgary in 1886. In 1887 he assisted in opening the Banff Detachment where he later had the distinction of conducting the first musical group (the North-West Mounted Police Regimental Band) to ever play at the Banff Springs Hotel. On January 12, 1888 he was transferred to Calgary and his band entertained in and around Calgary on many occasions. It is believed that this band was the only mounted band this country has ever had.[59]

A number of bands were formed but, with the exception of the Fort Walsh band, they were split up when the men were transferred to other posts. Generally, however, the men at the new posts wanted to

keep the bands going for a pastime and to play at many social functions and entertainments. Sgt. F. A. Bagley started the first Musician's Union in Calgary.

The Musical Ride received its start because of the men's desire to demonstrate their riding skills in which they had become proficient. They used figures from Cavalry drills, combining them in a flowing pattern with the accompaniment of the band music.

Sergeant Major Robert Belcher trained the first group of men whose first known display took place in 1876. After a riding school was built at Depot Division Regina in 1886, winter practice became possible, and Inspector W. G. Matthews led the men through several performances in which their riding skill was demonstrated. In the year 1904 the Musical Ride became a regular form of entertainment. It was received so well by the people of the west, Commissioner Perry realized the value it would have in the promotion of good public relations.

Thus through the variety of social events and activities, the men gained the respect and admiration of the inhabitants and new settlers alike of the North-West. They already had this respect with regard to keeping law and order, but now the settlers could see these men on another level. Social activities were only one branch of influence, the NWMP also initiated and took part in many sporting events in the North-West.

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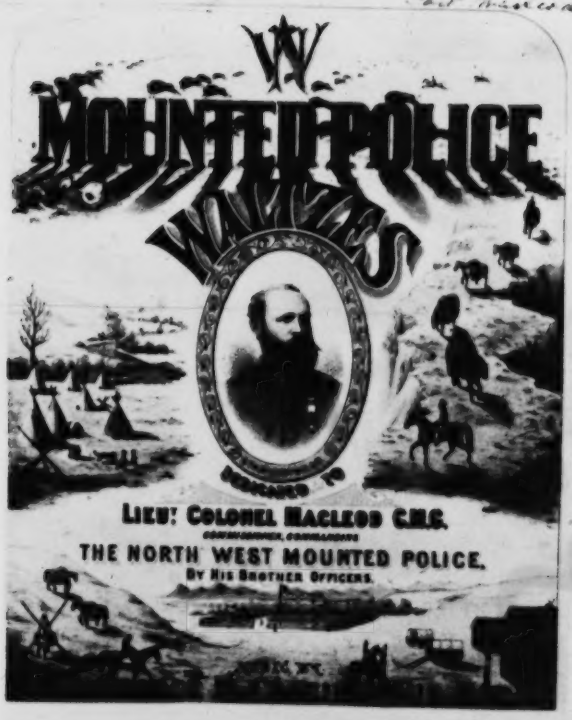

Illustration 2.

Cover of "Mounted Police Waltzes", music book.
Music composed by St. George Grozier, father of Inspector L.N.F. Crozier.
Dedicated to Commissioner J.F. Macleod.
1877

Illustration 3.

Recreation hall, "C" Division, N.W.M.P., Battleford, N.W.T. Christmas, 1880's.

Illustration 4.

N.W.M.P. camp, Fort Walsh, Saskatchewan.
1879

Illustration 5.

North West Mounted Police band, Banff, Alberta.
1887

Illustration 6.

N.W.M.P. band, Banff, Alberta.
1887

Illustration 7.

Staff-Sgt. Sam Heap and N.W.M.P. musical group. Top left, Staff- Sgt. Sam Heap.
1890.

Illustration 8.

N.W.M.P. mess at Battleford decorated for Christmas.
1890's

Illustration 9.

Posed group of N.W.M. policemen beside piano.
1890's

CHAPTER IV

TEAM SPORTS

The NWMP, whose members greatly influenced sporting life on the prairies, played different sports as a pastime, and because of their numbers, they were able to hold team competitions. Later when the area became more settled "the possibility of two or more teams in an area permitted some sports to develop before inter-village and inter-town competition became practical."[60]

Because of their heritage and past experience the men introduced such sports as Association Football, Rugby, Baseball, Cricket, Polo, Soccer, Track and Field, and many more sporting activities. Some of the posts where the men were very active in sport were Fort Macleod, Lethbridge, Regina and Fort Saskatchewan:

> Challenge matches against civilian teams soon led to the formation of clubs in the eighties and nineties. The Regina Force was responsible for much of the early sports organization in the Assiniboia district.[61]

As the communities grew so did the interest of the men of the force in the community affairs. Richard Burton Deane who took command of "K" Division at Lethbridge was very well liked by all.

Superintendent Steele, commenting on life at Fort Macleod in 1888, said: "Although life was strenuous, there was no lack of amusement or sports. During the summer, quadrille and tennis parties, polo and golf were frequent."[62] Requests for sports equipment by the men found such things as "footballs, boxing gloves, baseballs,

cricketing gear, tennis and fencing equipment being ordered."[63] When Constable George Alexander Adams returned to visit Fort Walsh he spoke of his early days there in 1882:

> There was plenty of diversion for the men in those days, there was a good swimming hole in Battle Creek to say nothing of football, cricket, and tennis court.[64]

Team sports and competition brought everyone together and games were played during, before, or in honor of some festive occasion; not that there had to be an occasion, because competition was keen much of the time.

Ice Hockey, although it did not seem to be as popular as some of the other sports, was played well before 1900 in the Edmonton and Fort Saskatchewan. Peter Ream in his book Fort on the Saskatchewan indicates that the Edmonton team and the Fort Saskatchewan Mounted Police were battling it out for the Hockey Championship. He also cites a report in the Edmonton Bulletin dated March 7, 1895. The story reported on the final game of a best of five series. Both teams had won two games apiece, and at full-time the score was still tied and because of the darkness it was decided to call it a draw. The ultimate result was that the Calgary team defeated the Mounted Police in a game, played the following day, and then went on to defeat Edmonton, and thus they were named the Provincial Champions.

Two teams formed in Edmonton in 1894 represented the north and south sides respectively. In 1895, the first Hockey Tournament was held and the north side team played a team from Calgary and the Fort Saskatchewan Mounted Police Team. Finally, a league formed in

1901 was one of the earliest and consisted of four teams: Victoria, NWMP, Fire Brigade, and the CPR.[65]

Cricket, a very popular pastime, was one of the sports played after Christmas dinner, or to celebrate the Queen's birthday. The first games played were not too well organized, and the equipment was crude. R. B. Nevitt, in his journal A Winter at Fort Macleod, illustrates this. He had made frames for a hotbed and then had partaken in a game of cricket with "stumps made out of an old lodge pole, an India rubber ball covered with leather, and a very primitive bat out of a piece of hardwood."[66] On May 5, 1875, he speaks of vegetating with nothing to do but managed to play cricket with crude equipment. Again on Saturday, May 8, 1875, because it was a Saturday and there was no drill, the men spent the morning making a new cricket bat, and in the afternoon, on the open prairie, played a double cricket and scratch eleven. Nevitt's side was badly beaten, but he maintained that his underhand bowling was far better than the "swift overarm of young Wilson."[67] Another game, played on May 20, 1875, found Nevitt's team the victors, but the match on the 24th of May, the Queen's birthday, was to be a great one with "C" Troop and "F" Troop playing against one another. On the day of the game the wickets were pitched by 10 o'clock. Nevitt was the captain of the "F" Troop eleven and Winder was captain of "C" Troop. When the time came to adjourn for dinner, "C" Troop was again at bat and they made 33 runs, thus totalling 60. This obviously was not sufficient because "F" troop were the victors in the end. Nevitt summed up the game in this manner. "F" Troop

was victorious, however, that was the great objective of the day and all minor considerations should be overlooked in the presence of that great fact."[68] A game between officers and non-commissioned officers against the men was played on June 5, 1875. Nevitt was once again captain of his side, and the men were certain of a victory once more. A few unsportsmanlike Sergeants refused to play thus annoying Nevitt, with the result that he would have nothing more to do with the match. The day was saved by Jackson, another member who filled the places of the absent Sergeants and the game proceeded. Nevitt's team won again, but in the return match a week later his team was defeated.

R. B. Nevitt is not the only member who referred to cricket as a pastime. John G. Donkin writes of playing cricket at night or walking to town as pastimes, also men who had left the Regina Barracks for posts in the west found members at Maple Creek in their red serge playing cricket in March, according to Donkin's account in the book.

William Metzler, in his diary: Experiences of a North-West Mounted Policeman, mentioned a cricket match on July 1, 1880, and another on May 24, 1883, when the men played against the citizens and won.

John H. McIllree wrote about a match at Calgary on Saturday, March 17, 1883, between the police and civilians. The police were the victors, with McIllree making 24 runs. On Saturday, June 18, 1892, another match was played against the town, which the town won. On June 17, 1892, the men played the platoon from Qu'Appelle, but unfortunately the results of this match are not known.

William Parker writes of cricket as being the chief form of recreation in the evenings. The bats and wickets had been made of birchwood thus were considered stronger than those made of willow. A letter to his father dated June 3, 1874, read:

> I am very fat and strong, have played in two cricket matches since we have been here--We are going to take up a lot of cricketing things with us so we can still keep up the old game although we shall be a good way from our friends.

This of course was written just prior to the March West, but it is a good indication the men were definitely planning to continue this popular pastime on their arrival in the North-West.

Unfortunately, the diaries of the men do not seem to be consistent in writing about their sporting activities. One account is given and then it may be a period of a year or two before any mention is made again. Nevertheless, due to newspaper accounts and other records we do know that the game of cricket, played as a pastime upon their arrival, developed into quite serious competition between the police and people of the settlements and the eventual towns.

October 1876 marked a celebration by the police at Fort Walsh, to commemorate their arrival in the area a year before. A cricket match was held in the afternoon, but owing to the uneven prairie ground the first four batsmen failed to score on Staff-Constable Nedham's total. A victory for Homan's team resulted.

Although police duties occupied more and more time with the ever increasing settlement, there was still plenty of time for sport. By 1896 the North-West Mounted Police Cricket Team at Prince Albert

was at its peak. It was these members of the team, "who patrolled the Minichina Hills southeast of Prince Albert to capture Almighty Voice in 1897."[69]

Fort Saskatchewan had a very good Mounted Police Cricket Team in the early days and was regarded as the team to beat. Their cricket matches were also played as entertainment for the Indians. The Edmonton Cricket Club, organized in 1882, felt it was the best and a month later issued a challenge in the paper to Fort Saskatchewan or any other team that would play them. Because the Edmonton Club members borrowed the bats and wickets belonging to the NWMP Team at Fort Saskatchewan, they declined the challenge as they would not have been able to practice. On May 15, 1884 the Fort Saskatchewan Cricket Club was organized with Inspector Griesbach as President, and Sergeant Parker as Team Captain. For the May 24th sports day a game was arranged to be played in Edmonton with the Edmonton team. The Edmonton Club was victorious. Undaunted, the Fort Saskatchewan Club challenged them to a return match on their home ground (which was considered superior to those in Edmonton), and won the game.

An amusing incident took place just a few days before the cricket match between the North-West Mounted Police and Clover Bar. Apparently some of the townspeople were in prison for short terms and on the day of the game the Captain of the Clover Bar Team went to A. H. Griesbach and asked to have three men released because he was short of players. On this same day the Captain of the Police Team also asked that three prisoners be released and allowed to play on the

Police Team, because after all they were in their custody. Griesbach finally agreed to release two for the Clover Bar Team and one for the NWMP Team. After the two day match was over A. H. Griesbach and his wife had a dinner party, and in attendance, but under armed guard, were the three prisoners.

Because the North-West Mounted Police had introduced the game, all of the larger posts had teams by the 1880's. In 1881 the first club was formed in Edmonton, and the fact that it was the first all-civilian team is worthy of note. The other teams which were formed in the 1880's all had a good percentage of police members.

Issues of the Fort Macleod Gazette, beginning in 1883, contain reports of cricket matches with the civilians at Calgary challenging the police at Fort Macleod, the civilians at Fort Macleod challenging the police and so on. Tuesday, December 29, 1885, was as warm as a spring day and a cricket match was played; one was also played on Christmas Eve. On Tuesday, September 28, 1886, "H" Troop challenged the Fort Macleod Club to a match. The North-West Mounted Police did not always win their games, but that did not seem to bother them as many matches were played and increased in number as the years passed. In fact, the April 15, 1897, edition of the Calgary Herald reported on a meeting held to organize for the ensuing season. At this meeting, the members of the Calgary Club decided to ask the police to amalgamate with them to help create even more interest in the sport.

Another team sport that created considerable interest was Rugby football. The exact date the NWMP started to play Rugby is

not certain but it is believed to be after Colonel Herchmer became Commissioner of the force in 1886. The first match was played with Winnipeg but did not really get underway in the North-West Territories until the 1890's. Rugby football was first played in 1890 at Calgary. "In addition to introducing the game here they also introduced rugby at Lethbridge, Fort Macleod, Edmonton, and Fort Saskatchewan in the 1890's."[70] October 1890 marked the first intertown match when the team from the NWMP barracks at Regina travelled to Winnipeg by train. The completion of the CPR certainly made competition between towns easier and more feasible. The Manitoba Free Press had heralded this match as quite the affair. Not only were the crowds out to meet the men at the CPR station, but the NWMP had brought their band which paraded up the main street, lending quite a festive spirit to Winnipeg. It was also to be the first time the Winnipeg team played an outside team in eleven years. The men of the force stayed in Winnipeg for a week and during this time played cricket along with the rugby games. Unfortunately the rugby game was lost to the Winnipeg team by a score of 39 to 4. However, they rallied and came back to defeat the Mounted Infantry, and by the time they were ready to return to Regina, they agreed that the trip (with the exception of one men who deserted) had been very successful. This week of activity in Winnipeg is credited for: "the immediate increase of player participation and public interest in rugby football in southern Manitoba."[71]

The first English Rugby Tournament in the North-West Territories was hosted by the NWMP in Regina in 1891. The initiative to form a Manitoba and North-West Territory Rugby Union was taken by the

NWMP of Depot Division at this time. Although more teams indicated an interest in participating in the tournament, the Police, Winnipeg, and Moosomin were the winners and because of the victory, won the "fifteen gold medals donated by the police officers and a cup donated by L. A. Hamilton, Canadian Pacific Land Commissioner and President of the Winnipeg Football Club."[72] A match for the silver challenge cup took place in October, 1891, with Moosomin defeating the NWMP of Regina.

In 1894 the townspeople of Regina formed a group to compete against the NWMP. A tournament that was to be held never did take place, as only the NWMP and Moosomin showed up to compete. The Hamilton Cup was won by the police team, and this team retained it until 1896 because no tournament was held in 1895 due to lack of interest. Nevertheless by 1896 the tournament was again arranged and the games were to be played in Winnipeg. Although the NWMP team was hoping to retain the cup it was unsuccessful and the Winnipeg team claimed ownership for the ensuing years.

The NWMP are also credited with having introduced the game to Alberta. The men had teams in both Lethbridge and Calgary by 1891. Later that year, the Lethbridge Club affiliated with the North-West and Manitoba Rugby Union and eventually played some matches with Regina. A team was formed in Edmonton in 1895, in Calgary in 1897 and; "The first major Rugby Tournament in Calgary in 1898 when the North-West Mounted Police Club from Regina emerged as victors."[73]

Another factor that was a boon to competition was the completion of the Calgary and Edmonton railway in 1891. In 1895 the

Saskatchewan Club joined with the Edmonton Club and called themselves the Saskatchewan Football Team, which went on to compete in a tournament in Calgary that year and were defeated by the NWMP team from Regina.

Association Football, or soccer as it is more widely known now, is another team game in which the men of the force took an active interest. One early football match between the police and Indians at Fort Walsh nearly caused trouble when an Indian player was sent flying by a rough shoulder check from a member of the NWMP team. The Indian drew his knife, and just as quickly the policemen ran to the Fort for refuge, until his rage had passed.

William Parker in his diary described a football match on Christmas Day, 1882, between the civilians and members of the force. The game played in below zero weather and a foot and a half of snow was understandably tough, and in more than one way. In front of the 200 spectators who had gathered, the members of the civilian team went after Parker, tore his shorts off, gave him a bloody nose, and as if this was not enough, he sprained his ankle. The men of the force did have the satisfaction of winning the game even under such adverse conditions. In a letter to his father dated June 3, 1874, Parker spoke of the two good footballs purchased by the officers and how they played "some fiery old games of an evening."[74]

The Friday, November 9, 1883, edition of the Calgary Herald reported the playing of the first football match under Association Rules in the history of Calgary. The teams involved consisted of the

NWMP, captained by Corporal James, and the citizens' team captained by the Reverend H. Robertson. Umpires for the police were Captain McIllree and Sergt. Major Lake, and those for the town were Major Baines and Mr. J. A. Lougheed. Major Walker, the referee, placed the ball at 3 p.m., but by the time it had started getting dark neither side had scored a victory. Nevertheless, both teams had played very well and the desirability of organizing a local club was expressed.

Unfortunately there was no follow up in the Calgary Herald but the Millarville football team had sent in a challenge to the NWMP football team to play on Easter Monday, but even though it was in the Calgary Herald, they did not receive a reply.

In 1898 the Calgary Tournament became known as the North-West Territories Championship Tournament. "Teams from Golden, British Columbia and High River played against the Calgary NWMP and Calgary Fire Brigade teams in 1898 and 1899."[75] The Calgary NWMP won the games on both occasions.

A league organized in Regina in 1903 was comprised of "teams from the NWMP barracks, the industrial school, normal school, high schools and the city."[76] Not much information has been recorded on Association Football, but since it really did not get organized until the late 1890's this could possibly explain the lack of information for the time period to 1904.

A sport that grew out of necessity was Rifle Shooting. The men were equipped with rifles for the march west, and many of the references are made to the target practices they had as a function of

their job. It did not remain as just a function of the job and competitions were set up, and eventually clubs were formed. By the turn of the century a Rifle Association could be found in most of the towns and villages of what was to be Alberta. The members of the force provided willing competition and in many instances sponsored the match itself.

Due to the great interest in Rifle Shooting, the commissioner in 1889 suggested a team be sent to Ottawa the following year to compete in the Dominion Matches and further suggested a bonus for the best shot in each division should be extra pay. In rifle competition held in the same year between members of "C" division and "F" division, "F" division emerged as the victors and thus won the Hudson Bay Cup. They were also to retain the cup a year later in competition.

The Commissioner's Report of 1888-1889 illustrated how rifle shooting and target practice and these Associations helped increase the spirit of rivalry and competition, and were also very important in the annual course of target practice. Further incentives to partake in this sport recommended by the Commissioner were: a free ammunition issue for members and the issuing of marksmen's badges. During the year several matches were held with "F" division winning every team match. Sergt. Gordon won the Assiniboine Rifle Association Match and Constable Carmichael won the trophy at the Saskatchewan Provincial Rifle Association. Evidently the men of the force did very well in competition, but it was never really established whether extra pay or marksmanship badges were received, at this time period in history.

Reference to rifle shooting is made through the diaries and

letters of the men. In Sgt. S. Hetherington's diary he has referred to a group of men leaving Fort Macleod to lay out a rifle range on August 7, 1899. Further reference to an annual meeting at Regina at the rifle range is also made. It was held on October 6th and 7th, 1899, and had a good prize list.

The diary of John H. McIllree refers to a rifle match held on May 24, 1876, when 16 matches were held that day. Two years later, on May 24, 1878, a rifle match was again part of the festivities. On March 17, 1881, Jake Wamacot and McIllree shot against Norman Moffat and Ward. The target was small and each shot had seven rounds. McIllree's side won. Friday, March 10, 1882, a rifle match, pitting the civilians against the police, was held with the police as the victors. Numerous matches are referred to in which the Old Country competed with the Canadians, and in some cases the Indians challenged the men as well.

William Parker's visit to a Cree camp with the treaty money ended when the chief challenged Parker to a match - 10 shots at 200 yards. Parker won it. New Year's preparations included planning in Parker's words: "a grand shooting match, between the English, Scottish, Irish and Canadians." Five men were to represent each country and much practicing was done in preparation.

The Fort Saskatchewan Rifle Club was formed in 1887. The presence of the NWMP may have given them a very decided advantage because they did excel in competition with the annual contest between Edmonton and Fort Saskatchewan. They were so expert that every

competition was won for 15 years, and their first loss did not occur until 1902.

The NWMP built rifle ranges mainly for training, but 1884 was the year in which two associations were formed. Colonel Macleod organizing one in Fort Macleod, and the NWMP another in Calgary. Both clubs used the Manitoba Rifle Association Rules.

The Fort Macleod Gazette had many reports on rifle matches. On Wednesday, April 4, 1883, and also Good Friday, a match between the citizens and the police was held which the police won by ten points. The November 7, 1884, issue of the Gazette contained an account on a match held on Thanksgiving on the Mounted Police Range and was won by Captain Cotton with Dr. Kennedy a close second. After this meet it was decided to form a rifle club at Macleod but it did not become a reality until Saturday, November 29, 1884. The event at the barracks for the week of March 7 to 14, 1885, was a rifle match. It was limited to Non-commissioned Officers and Constables; Englishmen vs. Canadians. The Captain of the English Team was Cons. Moyer, and of the Canadian Team, Serg. Irwin. The Canadians won by forty points. When this match was completed another one was held between veterinary Serg. Poett and Cons. Clancey. Both were excellent marksmen and Serg. Poett was by only one point, and thus congratulated as the crack shot of the day. At a match held on July 18, 1885, attended by police and civilians Dr. Kennedy won and again proved to be the best shot in the Association. Four members of the NWMP had a match against four civilians on Tuesday, February 23, 1886, the week of a rifle competition

between "C" and "H" Troops. Another, held on Wednesday, June 13, 1888, took place on the Association Range and was won by the police. The first regimental matches in the history of the force were held in Calgary in 1902. The Annual Report for that year explains how the teams were made up of eight men from each division, who competed in rifle and revolver matches. It was such an important event that the Slater Shoe Company of Montreal, E. L. Donlevy, Esq., of Winnipeg, and Superintendent Constantine gave sterling silver cups. Cash prizes were also contributed by the canteens and officers, and the Canadian Pacific Railway reduced fares so the public could attend the event. Thus the rifle, originally intended for protection and hunting, became an implement for sport rivalry and competition. With the leisure time, it was inevitable that eventually they would make a sport of shooting at a target.

Baseball was also played, and at first the equipment was quite crude as the men had to make do with what was available to them. At Wild Horse, Saskatchewan, the NWMP used to arrange baseball games with the settlers and homesteaders of Cottonwood, USA, for the fourth of July. These games were a regular occurrence throughout the season, but especially on the fourth. R. B. Nevitt described a baseball game in which he played, on March 3, 1875, at Fort Macleod. The ball was made by another member and the bats were fashioned out of pieces of greenwood. Even with this equipment the men enjoyed themselves. On May 24, 1875, a baseball game was played after the cricket match, against the citizens who were badly beaten.

Fort Saskatchewan was also the scene of baseball games, and one of the first referred to was in 1885. "The Mounted Police defeated No. 7 Company of the 65th Montreal Rifles by a score of 36 to 13 in five innings."[77] The Fort Saskatchewan Team reached its peak in the early 1900's, and although Edmonton defeated them in competition in 1902 the Fort Saskatchewan team rallied in 1903 and won. The Shera Cup to be awarded, stipulated that the same team win twice, and in 1904 Fort Saskatchewan succeeded by defeating Edmonton. The game was also played in Fort Macleod on a challenge basis. The Saturday, March 10, 1883, edition of the Fort Macleod Gazette reported a game between members of the force which resulted in the losing side buying supper at Aunties.

Lacrosse, although mentioned very briefly, was played, and the NWMP formed a club at Fort Macleod in 1892 with Superintendent Steele as the President. Unfortunately no other accounts as the degree to which this game was played could be found.

In July, 1892, at Fort Macleod, the first Polo Club was formed with "most of the initiative coming from members of the North West Mounted Police station in the town."[78] Colonel Macleod was President. At the tournament held at Fort Macleod in 1892, Colonel Macleod donated a Cup which was won by the local team. They had competed against teams from Pincher Creek, High River, and Calgary for the Cup. Many games were held, but the descriptions do not state which members of the force were competing. Obviously they did play because it was the members who initiated the formation of the Fort Macleod Team.

One can conclude the members of the North West Mounted Police were a driving force behind early team competition in the North-West. A group of men stationed in one place had a ready made team and they took advantage of this. It is natural that settlers banded together to form teams to compete against them. Prior to this their competition was pretty well limited to the members of the police. The active part they took in the affairs of the communities made for good relations with the townspeople, and they (the NWMP) were looked up to by most of these people.

The men of the NWMP were not restricted to just team competition, they were also active in individual activities, both in the barracks and in the town.

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[78]Cox, op. cit., p. 371.

Illustration 10.

Hockey game in Dawson, Y.T.
1898-1918

Illustration 11.

Cricket team, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan.
1890

Illustration 12.

Cricket field, Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan.
September, 1903.

Illustration 13.

Rugby football tournament at Regina N.W.M.P. barracks.
May 26, 1891

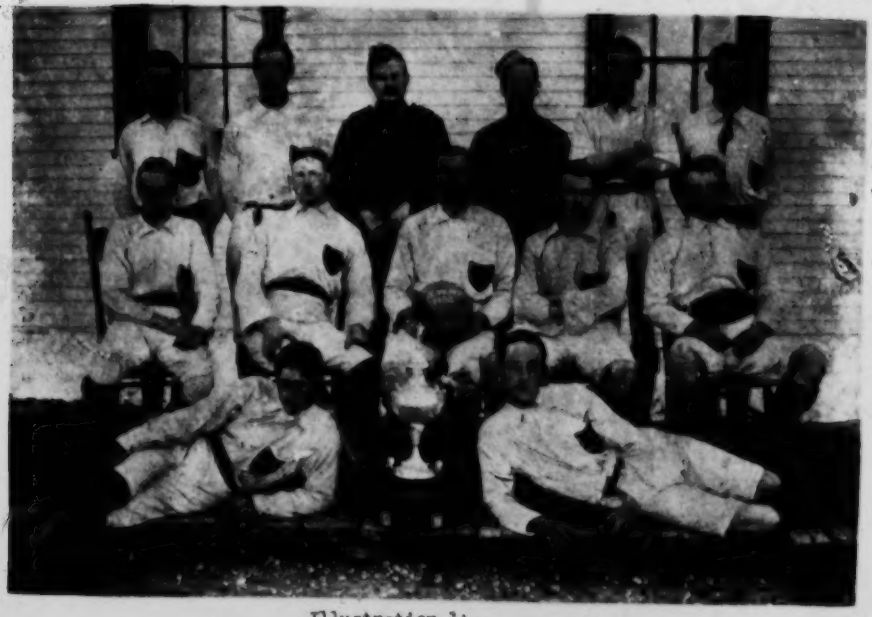

Illustration 14.

N.W.M.Police football team, Fort Calgary.
1900

Illustration 15

"E" Division, football team, N.W.M.P., Calgary.
1901

Illustration 16

Calgary rifle team with N.W.M.P. grand challenge trophy.
September, 1903

Illustration 17

Rifle team with 5th Regiment cup.
1903

Illustration 18

N.W.M.P. polo team, Macleod.
1892

CHAPTER V

INDIVIDUAL SPORTS

Although the members of the North-West Mounted Police played many team sports and competed, not only among themselves but with other teams, they were also much involved in individual activities and recreation rooms were constructed at the posts eventually. Prior to Commissioner Irvine's Report of 1881, French and Macleod had obtained grants to help establish reading rooms at some of the posts. However, the year 1879 found the establishment of recreation rooms and libraries written into the act.

The Commissioner's Report for 1881 stressed the importance of these recreation areas. He felt the Imperial Regulations summed it up adequately:

> The object is to encourage the soldiers to employ their leisure hours in a manner that will combine amusement with the attainment of useful knowledge, and teach them the value of sober, regular and moral habits.

The Commissioner established a recreation room and library at headquarters, and found it very successful with all ranks. Because of its proven success he felt that all posts should most definitely contain these two facilities.

Commissioner Irvine's Report for 1882 contained very favorable results on recreation rooms that had been established at Fort Walsh, and Fort Macleod. By having billiard tables at Fort Macleod and Calgary the men did not go into the village where he was sure they could

not but be influenced by evil because in his words "Amusement will be had, and if not provided will be sought and many evil effects will result."[79] His 1886 Report indicated construction of these facilities at the posts was well underway. New barracks were being constructed at Lethbridge, Regina, and Battleford and he again stressed how important it was the men have recreation rooms for entertainment and amusement at the barracks, to prevent them from seeking it in the billiard saloons. He sympathized, and realized that with no threatres, concerts, or other amusements it was hard on the men, especially when they had been accustomed to such recreation.

Evidence that these recreational facilities were successful can be found in comments by the men themselves. William Metzler spoke of going to the recreation room for a game of billiards. Many card games were also played in these rooms. A comment about life at Regina in A. L. Haydon's book The Riders of the Plains states:

> On its lighter side, life at Regina has many attractions to offer the recruit. Barracks for the men, riding-school, stables, guard-house, and church and conveniences for recreation have not been overlooked. While in the canteen are billiard tables and a piano.[80]

The men under Superintendent John Cotton of F Division at Prince Albert built their recreation room, which consisted of a separate building constructed of logs. This was completed in 1893, and was used not only for reading but for theatrical performances and many other events as well. Thus with these recreation areas at the posts the men enjoyed their leisure time.

Sports Days initiated by the men became very popular and were

usually held on the 24th of May, Queen Victoria's Birthday, as well as at other times. R. B. Nevitt described an evening on March 30, 1875, after the races, in this manner.

> In the evening a grand pyrotechnic display excited the wonder and admiration of the aborigines--rockets, squibbs and fire crackers keeping up an incessant din.[81]

Apparently the men of the North-West Mounted Police supplied the squibbs and firecrackers for the display.

In a letter to his family dated Fort Macleod, June 6, 1877, William Parker described the birthday celebrations for the Queen. A twenty-one gun salute had been fired at noon, and in the afternoon a Rifle Match had taken place. Because of the poor condition of the ground, the athletic events were held over until May 26 when the ground was in better condition. Parker was quite successful in his endeavors and won two first prizes and two second prizes. The tug-of-war was considered a draw because the rope broke right at the heat of the tug. To round out the day's activities horse races were held and a good time was had by everyone. Parker decided to begin training for sports that would possibly be held on Dominion Day as he did not want the other men to out-do him.

May 24, 1885, was actually celebrated on the Monday because the holiday fell on the Sunday. Monday morning entertainment got off to a great start with a baseball game between the North West Mounted Police and nine members of the 65th. After five innings the NWMP with a score of 36 to 12 were the victors. In the afternoon a variety of games were played, organized by the Fort Sackatchewan Amateur Athletic

Association.

Samuel B. Steele, in his book Forty Years in Canada, wrote of his transfer to Fort Macleod. Before he and his men left he arranged to have their annual sports day at four mile creek:

> All the inhabitants of the district, white and red were invited to take part in them, with the object of enhancing the friendly feeling which was growing between the white people and the Indians.[82]

On July 2nd activities got underway with a march past Colonel Baker just before noon: "so as to impress Isadore. The Colonel did not care to do it but, as I felt it would place him in an important position with the Indians he consented, and all of the movements of a cavalry squad were performed before him, at all paces."[83] The sports started after lunch with whites and Indians competing in all the events. The members of the North West Mounted Police came first in sprinting, but the Indians won in the long distance running, and in wrestling on horseback they were unsurpassed. In this latter event the men of the force did not compete because, according to Steele, "It would not have been wise on account of the position they occupied in the country."[84] The civilians who tried to compete with the Indians in this event were tossed off their horses one after another. The mile race was won by an Indian on his buckskin horse, completing the circuit in one minute and fifty seconds. At the end of the day, all were pleased and agreed the day had been a great success, and Isadore came with his tribe to say goodbye.

The Queen's birthday was celebrated in fine style at Lake

Bennett. Again, Samuel B. Steele and his men arranged the games for the day's activities.

> The tug-of-war was the great event, there was Scotch, Nova Scotian, American, Australian teams competing, selected from the most powerful of many strongmen who were encamped along the shores of Lake Lindeman and Bennett.[85]

The North-West Mounted Police won the event, even though there was considerable doubt because the anchor man on the other team stood 6 feet 7 inches and weighed 250 pounds. When the men did win, Captain Rant, one of the judges: "true to his cloth, could not help throwing his hat into the air when the red coats won this event."[86]

The Annual Sports Day at Fort Macleod, started by the North-West Mounted Police, became an annual event. The Monday, March 14, 1883, issue of the Fort Macleod Gazette printed a list of the events to be held on May 24 and 25. Two committees were appointed, a citizens' committee of three, and a police committee of three. The sports for the 24th of May were as follows.

1. 100 yds. dash open to all.
2. 220 yds. " " " " .
3. Running high jump open to all.
4. half mile race.
5. three legged race.
6. high jump with pole.
7. mile race.
8. standing high jump.
9. smoking race.
10. hurdle race, 220 yds. over hurdles 3'6" high.
11. blindfold race, hands tied behind, 100 yds.
12. running long jump.
13. sack race.
14. throwing cricket ball.
15. consolation race, one quarter mile open to all previous competitors who had not won a prize.

The program for the 25th of May was:

9 O'clock a.m.
HORSE RACES
1. half mile race open to all.

2. 600 yds. race excluding winner of preceding race.
3. quarter-mile race, excluding winners of preceding races.
4. 600 yds. race, open to all horses, not entered for the above races.
5. scrub race, open to all horses not entered for the above races.
6. slow race.
7. hurdle race, half mile, over 8 hurdles 2' 10" high and 50 yds. apart. 1:30 p.m. cricket match.

The Queen's birthday celebrations in 1885 almost did not take place, but according to the Fort Macleod Gazette, the preceding Friday morning the North-West Mounted Police saved the day and raised a large amount of money and arranged the programme. The sports took place at Sample's Bottom with approximately 500 people in attendance, and consisted of high jump, 1/4 mile race, 100 yds. race, hop-step and jump, high jump with a pole, tug-of-war, and horse races. The evening entertainment consisted of a magic lantern show and a dance at the Fort. Everything went well and according to the paper "was quite as good, and quite as well carried out as if there had been ample time for preparation."

Many more accounts of Victoria Day Celebrations were given by the men of the force, Donkin, Metzler, and McIllree, etc., all wrote about the celebrations, describing what a grand time they had had. Various sports were held along the lines of the previous list, and generally a dance was held in the evening.

Unfortunately the Dominion Day Sports were only mentioned occasionally, so it would seem the Victoria Day Sports were the more popular. The Fort Macleod Gazette, for example, made mere mention of sports for Dominion Day, 1887.

These sports days brought the white settlers, Indians, and

members of the force together and did much in the establishment of good relations.

The tug-of-war not only took place on holidays, but also at other times. An account of one such match is given by Captain Burton Deane. This match took place during Autumn at Regina. It was decided to have a Sports Day and the three entries for the tug-of-war competition were the town team, the Montreal Garrison Artillery and the North-West Mounted Police. The artillery team was beaten and when the police team got down to business, in Captain Deane's eyes "there was nothing in western Canada to touch it."[87] He proved to be correct because the police team could not be budged and succeeded in pulling the town team across the line.

Foot races were held at anytime. One race pitted constable Fogg and a Metis against each other for 200 yards. The victor, and the winner of $75.00, was Constable Fogg. Two constables, Beattie and Moyer challenged each other to a 100 yard race for $5.00, which Constable Beattie won. The Calgary Herald, Friday, September 7, 1883, edition carried an interesting account of a race between a Mr. W. West and Constable Pennyfather. A large amount of money was gambled and Pennyfather won the first heat with Mr. West the victor in the second one: "A large crowd was present and considerable money changed hands." Many foot races were held, but as the above illustrates, these races were not always planned beforehand, but also impromptu affairs.

Horse races, although a feature of every sports day, were held constantly throughout the year. Simon Clarke's diary tells of a race

on February 21, 1880, between Coyota, a member of "C" troop and Dan Driscoll, a citizen. After numerous arguments and problems over the placement of flags, the race got underway with Dan Driscoll the winner. Many of the men raced their horses and Dan Driscoll seems to have been the man to beat because he is also mentioned in the diary of John H. McIllree as having competed against one of the men on Friday, January 23, 1880.

William Parker has written an excellent account of a horse race in one of his letters home. One race held in the afternoon was between the Metis, Indians, and North-West Mounted Police. The challenge was: "To race their best horse for one mile against their best buffalo runner and champion of the prairies."[88] The race track was to be above the Fort where the ground was smooth. Before the race, hundreds of whites, Indians, and Metis lined the race track to bet with horses, blankets, beads and money on the outcome of the race. The winner in this race was Kangaroo, the police horse winning by 3 or 4 lengths. According to Parker the men of the force returned the winnings to the Indians in most cases, thus making for friendly relations.

Christmas Day, 1877, was spent in horse racing. Corporal Ward's horse fell in one hurdle race and almost killed him. At the time of the letter he had written home, he was still in the hospital, but was able to move around. The men did not need to look elsewhere for racing competitors as there were many stationed with them at the Forts.

Samuel B. Steele wrote about numerous horse races, but explained the intervals between the races were taken up with roping wild

steers, riding bronchos and other events. The competitors taking part in these activities usually came from long distances. All Indians and their families attended and many races were especially set up for the Indians:

> for the men were real sports, and rode to win; Jerry Potts was always the starter and decided many disputes.[89]

The Fort Macleod Gazette was a good source of information for race results and for advertising races that were to take place at a later date. On Saturday, July 30, 1882, a horse race took place between St. Warren's mare and Skylark, Colonel Macleod's horse. Skylark won easily. Another entry for Thursday, December 4, of the same year mentioned a race for the 20 of December between two of the broncos, but this one was only being discussed by the police boys; whether or not it was actually run, the paper did not say.

The Saturday, February 24, 1883, edition of the paper - the police boys at Fort Walsh offered to back a horse from their post to race against any horse in "C" or "E" troops, for a quarter mile distance and a prize of five hundred dollars. This challenge was open for one month, and the race was to take place at Fort Macleod. Another race on Monday, June 4, 1883, was held on the old race course below the town of Fort Macleod. Many cowboys were present, along with a number of ladies.

At an annual summer race meet held at Springbank, near Calgary, in 1898, Inspector J. O. Wilson went to the aid of the Indians who were very clearly being discriminated against when the organizing committee for the races decided to exclude them. He said:

> I protested on behalf of the Indians whom I considered to be very unjustly treated, and a most short-sighted policy on the part of the stock owners. The bills did not bar Indians or anyone so I could not see how they could deter them. Public opinion, outside of the few horse owners who were no doubt afraid of being beaten, was with me in this matter.[90]

Thus, the horse races like a lot of sports had some unjust people involved in them, though for the most part the races were run fairly and Indians, police and civilians enjoyed taking part.

In the winter, although sports activities had to be somewhat curtailed, the men and people of the Forts turned to sleighing, skiing, snowshoeing, skating, and although very little has been written about it, curling as well.

The diaries of the men frequently mention winter sports. The entry in Burton Deane's diary mentioned sleighing, and snow shoeing. They did not have a covered skating rink and it was far too cold to skate outdoors.

John G. Donkin, in Trooper and Redskin in the Far Northwest, had numerous accounts of the winter activities. The settlement girls who drove their showy cutters down past the North West Mounted Police quarters daily was one of the pleasant happenings. The skating rink was the big attraction at night, but much skating was done on the creek as well.

> So the Indian Summer wrapped in its regal robes had given way to the first snap of the coming winter we were anxiously awaiting the summons to snug quarters. The creek rapidly became coated with ice and some of us enjoyed skating.[91]

Many carnival nights were held at the skating rink when the band played and everyone came dressed in costumes:

> I have seen some very good and costly costumes and some very ingenious ones also. One stout party, I remember impersonated bottled beer, and the familiar triangle shielded his portly stomach. There was of course, generally a flaming Mephostophilis, and the inevitable young lady dressed as night.[92]

The band was spoken of very favorably also:

> The musicians generally struck up rattling tunes, under a wooden shed, where a stove gave the necessary warmth. The skaters whirled round and round upon the ice under the sparkling stars, for there was no roof but that of heaven.[93]

Mrs. Knight, who lived in Calgary, reminisced in her journal about skating on the Bow and Elbow Rivers, and in the covered rink, "served the most important way of enjoying ourselves in the long cold winter months."[94] The band was not present every night, but on certain nights it was and they "played lively tunes every other half hour, I used to see how many redcoats I could skate with in an evening."[95]

In William Parker's letter, dated January 16, 1877, to his home he referred to the fact that they skated on the river. The following New Years, January 1, 1878, a skating party was held on the river. Mention is made of a skating club being formed and a nice little rink was to be made on the Elbow.

Although there are not many references to curling, one was made by John G. Donkin.

> Wherever you find a scotchman, you are sure of a curling club, unless you are frizzling under the torrid zone. As the Caledonian settlement was very strong here, there were two clubs. The winning team

would drive around the settlement in sleighs with brooms at the carry and give periodic whoops.96

Obviously curling was popular in some areas, especially those inhabited by Scotsmen.

Gymnastics were fairly popular, and although most deaths occurred from natural causes or in the line of duty, Sergeant Taylor died after he fell from a horizontal bar while practicing gymnastics. The other men were not as unfortunate as Sgt. Taylor in their gymnastic endeavors and in 1904 a performance was put on at a North-West Mounted Police Ball in Battleford. The following program is the original from the book of programs and invitations of Mrs. Jessie DeGear:

PROGRAM HELD

A Gymnastic Squad

Part 1
(1) Manual and firing exercises carbine and revolver by tap of drum "B" squad.
(2) Club swinging to music. Supt. A. C. Macdonnel OSO.
(3) Physical Drill with arms to music. B. Squad.
(4) Vaulting horse, and figure "A" Squad.
(5) Extension motions to music and living fans.

A SQUAD

(1) Children club swinging to music Miss Geraldine McGinnis, Master Fred Light and Ian Macdonnell.
(2) Barbell exercises to music. "A" Squad
(3) Cavalry sword exercises. "C" Squad
(4) Clog dancing - Constable Glacken.
(5) Parallel Bars and three figures. Tumbling dogs. "A" Squad
(6) Figure marching-all bands.

"B" Manual and Physical Drill Squad.
Sergeant McCarthy, Corporal Harper-Nicholson, Constables Crouch, Conradi, Draycott, Foster, Glacken, O'Keefe, Tubb, Fugleman, Sergt. Major Richardson.
"C" Cavalry Squad. Sergt. McCarthy, Corpl. Harper, Const. Tubb, Foster.

John G. Donkin also referred to the fact that many men amused

themselves in the evenings with Quoits, and gymnastics on the Horizontal bar.

Lawn Tennis and Golf were two more activities the men participated in. Fort Saskatchewan in 1885 had a tennis court in the police barracks. The May 7, 1903 edition of the Reporter referred to it in this manner: "The police tennis court is running full time."[97] Samuel B. Steele tells of how Crozier, Cotton, and Kennedy were playing in front of the post when the fugitives escaped, and they proceeded to go after them. Golf was introduced in 1895, and in October of that year a club was formed at Fort Macleod. The course was below the North-West Mounted Police Barracks.

Track and Field Meets were popular, and although were held at the many Sports Days, were also held at other times. One such meet organized by the Fort Macleod Police was held in 1876, the competitors including police, Indians, and civilians. The events consisted of running, jumping, and throwing for prizes totalling $280.00:

> Creditable performances for those days, were in the pole vault and the mile run, with the former event won with a height of 9 feet 3 inches and the winning mile runner recording 5 minutes 8 seconds.[98]

Tony Cashman in his book The Best Edmonton Stories, tells about a member of the force named Joe Clark. Joe Clark joined the North-West Mounted Police in Regina in 1892. "His prowess in track-and-field soon made him the toast of the troop."[99] An amusing incident happened at a meet the NWMP arranged in Regina. Joe Clark entered all the events and won every one, along with the $108.00 in prize money. Two weeks

after this he decided being a member of the force was not his forte, so he left for Ontario, only to be brought back by the force and charged with desertion. This was the end of his career in the Mounted Police.

Bowling is referred to just once, when Simon John Clarke, a member of the force, opened a bowling alley on February 8, 1881. Whether or not the men used the alley is not known.

Numerous activities were indulged in by the men individually and with the others. Kristjan Anderson wrote about riding his bike down by the river for about a mile and then returning. Fred Bagley mentioned the church parades, where one of the readings of the scripture was done by an officer, and well known hymns were sung:

> During the rendition of which the men seemed to be impressed with the solemnity of the occasion.[100]

Both John Donkin and Simon Clarke wrote about the gambling in the barracks. "Sub Const. C. Daly won one hundred dollars, playing day and night now."[101] Robert McDougall and John H. McIllree mentioned hunting and fishing numerous times, either going alone or with another member. Not every trip was successful but on one occasion 12 prairie chickens and a few wild pigeons were shot; the next time 9 geese were shot. John H. McIllree did a lot of fishing, and in fact fishing tackle had been issued on the March West. On July 4, 1877, McIllree caught 53 pike, and he was constantly going for walks with his dog, looking for rabbits, ducks, geese, etc.

There was no shortage of activity for the men, and when need be they made their own diversions, thus not only entertaining themselves

but involving people they came in contact with and thereby greatly influencing early social life in the west.

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[84]Ibid., p. 253.

[85]Ibid., p. 310.

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[89]Steele, op. cit., p. 270.

[90]Macleod, The NWMP, p. 174.

[91]Donkin, op. cit., p. 381.

[92]Ibid., p. 93.

[93]Ibid., p. 93.

[94]Knight, op. cit.,

[95]Ibid.

[96]Donkin, op. cit., pp. 92,93.

[97]Ream, op. cit., p. 381.

[98]Cox, op. cit., p. 181.

[99]Tony Cashman, The Best Edmonton Stories. Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1976, p. 130.

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[101]Simon John Clarke (Fort Macleod) Diary of NWMP Experiences in North-West Territories 1876-1886. Biography 1871.

Illustration 19

N.W.M.P.' gymnastic club, Battleford, Saskatchewan.
1904

Illustration 20

N.W.M.P. foot race, Edmonton Exhibition, 1912.

Poor Copy

Illustration 21

A N.W.M.P. card game, Regina.
1880's

Poor Copy

Illustration 22.
MEMBERS OF "C" DIVISION, N.W.M.P.,
BATTLEFORD, SASK. 1905-6.

Front Row, Left to Right (Seated) Cst. Draycott, ------, -------,
S/Cst. Williams.

Second Row, Left to Right-- Cst. P. Crouch (standing by gun), S/Cst. Dobree,
(Kneeling) S/Cst. "Greasy Walker (cook)
(Seated)-- S/Maj. H. Richardson, V.C., -----,
Lt. Col. A.C.R. MacDonnell, Dr.----, Sgt. Light,

Third Row, Left to Right (standing)-- Cst. Conradi, Cst. Fleming, Cst.
McCarthy, Sgt. Jackson, Cst. McClacken,
Cst. Foster, Cst. Tubb, Cst. Burke,
Indian Scout------.

Poor Copy

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY

Although the March West was decidedly difficult and some of the men broke under the strain, the others persevered and made it to the end. Under the leadership of such famous men as French, Walsh, Macleod, and Steele, they quickly became a part of the land and gained the respect of the Indians, as well as the settlers who were to follow them to this very isolated area of the Canadian North-West.

During the Christmas of 1874, their first in the West, every post hosted a great Christmas dinner inviting Indians, and any settlers who were around, to show their appreciation. These Christmas dinners became annual affairs, along with the elaborate balls, for which invitations were extended. Many impromptu dances were also held and the men put on theatrical performances, forming dramatic troupes. All this added much to the popularity of the NWMP with the settlers and Indians alike. Hugh Dempsey referred to the popularity of the North-West Mounted Police at the community level:

> At the community level members of the force, particularly the officers, identified with and were readily accepted by the leading local citizens. The headquarters may have been the cortex of policy, social life, and barracks duty.[102]

R. C. MacLeod referred to the fact that the men of the force, and particularly the officers, saw the frontier society of the west as having a definite upper class. In the larger centres there were clubs to which the elite belonged and the officers of the force considered

themselves to be a definite part of these.

> The Mounted Police Officer in command at Calgary automatically received an honorary membership to the Ranchmen's Club, Calgary's oldest and most exclusive.[103]

Because the NWMP were expected to be leaders in the community,

> In 1897 Commissioner Herchmer complained that officers without private means found it impossible to do the entertaining expected of them.[104]

Major-General Selby-Smith after his 1875 inspection "recommended distinctive uniforms for the officers because of their position in society."[105] Although he did have other recommendations, this is one the government implemented.

The men of the force, as well as being good builders, had to grow their own vegetables and grain crops. This had a two-fold advantage in that they not only had a food supply of their own, but they lent their equipment and knowledge of the agricultural conditions of the area to the settlers. Another point in the favor of the force in winning over the settlers was that

> The settlers saw the police as practical men who understood the problems of the country. When plans (in 1897) to reduce and perhaps replace the force became public knowledge there was a wave of protest in the west.[106]

The men were very active in team sports, playing, not only amongst themselves, but involving the townspeople as the west became more and more settled. Sports of this nature were natural to the men because usually within their ranks there were enough men for two teams to compete against one another: "Every detachment or division had

sport as a major activity."[107] Eventually ranchers, many of them with the same background as members of the North West Mounted Police, but with varied occupations, moved into the towns and began playing cricket, polo, rugby, etc.

> People had more leisure time and with this came an increase in sporting activities. Local sporting clubs arose. The police detachments often lead the way in this regard.[108]

Because of the police teams already present at the Forts, local teams were encouraged because competition between the two teams would now be possible.[109]

Inspector Macdonell, in his Annual Report of 1902 from Regina, also indicated the importance of sport. Winter sports were being organized, with the barrack curling club being reorganized. A gymnastic club had been set up, and baseball was being played both in the riding school and in a room above the gymnasium. He also mentioned plans to change the bowling alley into a shooting gallery.

According to the RCMP Quarterly, a number of programs emerged from Ottawa dealing with community relations. These programs had a two-fold purpose, aiming at helping the policeman understand the community, and the community understand the role of the Mounted Policeman:

> One excellent program, in existence since 1873, has been members participations in sports activities, both within the community and within the force.[110]

Participation has been ongoing because the members of the force are still very much involved in sport and have been for 103 years. The

article goes on to say more in connection with the present. Very few members could say "sports participation has hindered attempts to develop a better spirit between himself and his community."[111]

While the men took part in team sports, they also competed as individuals against other members, settlers and Indians. The Victoria Day Sports events were very popular, with hundreds of people attending and participating in programmes put on by the members of the force. An article in the Fort Macleod Gazette dated Tuesday, July 12, 1886, had this to say in their favor:

> The most pleasant memories remain of the various occasions on which the police officers, non-commissioned officers and men have entertained their numerous friends at the barracks and consequently when anything is projected by them, it is always looked forward to with eager pleasure.

D. J. McCarthy, an ex Sergeant of the force, wrote an article in the Scarlet and Gold Magazine about his sports participation. According to him the men had plenty of time to indulge in hunting, football, cricket, gymkhana sports and polo.

> Some evenings we would sneak out our horses and race them with the Indians at the old race course, down by the Battle River. This was holding our police careers in our hands as it were, but we would take any chances in the name of sport.[112]

The members of the North-West Mounted Police paved the way for peaceful settlement of the West.

> The NWMP occupied a position of power rarely equalled by a force in free society. There is little evidence the population feared the powers of the police and much evidence they entirely approved.[113]

Had it not been for the men of the force the problems experienced by

the Americans in settling the American West might well have been repeated in western Canada. The North West Mounted Police acted as a go between, listening and dealing with the problems of both Indians and settlers, and then bringing them together in sports competition and social events.

> They exercised a powerful influence on the entire range of administrative policy in the North-West. Because of their power and prestige they were a potent force in moulding the political and social ideas of the people of the territories.[114]

Unfortunately, there does not seem to be a written policy with the attitude of the NWMP to the playing of sport. The only mention of anything close to this was the statement prepared as to who could join the force: "The men were to be of sound body and mind and be able to ride."

The men coming from Eastern Canada, Britain and the USA had played sports prior to their engagement in the North West Mounted Police; it had been a part of their lives back home, and it was still to be, even though they were now in the unsettled prairies of the west. Whether the commanding officers ever tried to figure out the relationship of health, morale, community relations and efficiency to the playing of sport is unanswered. (I do think it is quite safe to say that these were the direct result of the playing of sport.) It is mentioned in different places throughout the thesis that through the different sports events, settlers and Indians were brought together. Since the NWMP members were trying to prepare the Indians for the coming of the settlers, the fact they could compete in sporting

contests was a definite advantage for prairie settlement.

It is reasonable to believe participation did increase, because as communities increased in size more people were available to participate and, therefore, more teams could be formed.

Whether the development of sport would have been different without the influence of the NWMP is difficult to say. I do believe though, the organization and promotion would have taken much longer, had they not taken the initiative.

In conclusion, the North-West Mounted Police had a very direct and beneficial effect on the sporting and social life of the Canadian North-West, through their participation in these activities. As the British military left their sporting mark in India, so did the NWMP in the North-West Territories.

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[103]Macleod, The NWMP and Law Enforcement 1873-1905, p. 79

[104]Ibid., p. 79.

[105]Ibid., p. 79.

[106]Ibid., p. 34.

[107]RCMP Quarterly, Vol. 23, 1957-58.

[108]Reid, op. cit., p. 12.

[109]Ibid., p. 92.

[110]Corporal R. S. Cooper, RCMP Quarterly, Volume 41, Winter 1976, p. 37.

[111]Ibid., p. 37.

[112]D. J. McCarthy, Scarlet and Gold Magazine, 38th edition, 1958. Vancouver: 813, 675 West Hastings Street, p. 41.

[113]Macleod, op. cit., p. 36.

[114]Ibid., p. 74.

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